# CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN SOVIET DEFENSEMAKING FROM BREZHNEV TO GORBACHEV

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**ESRA PAKİN**

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I certify that I have read this thesis and I have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of International Relations.

Asst. Prof. Nur Bilge Criss
Thesis Supervisor

I certify that I have read this thesis and I have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of International Relations.

Asst. Prof. Pınar Bilgin
Examining Committee Member

I certify that I have read this thesis and I have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of International Relations.

Asst. Prof. Walter E. Kretchik
Examining Committee Member

Approval of the Institute of Economics and Social Sciences

Prof. Kürşat Aydoğan
Director

## ABSTRACT

### CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS IN SOVIET DEFENSEMAKING FROM BREZHNEV TO GORBACHEV

**PAKİN, ESRA**

MIR in International Relations

Supervisor: Asst. Prof. Nur Bilge Criss

June 2003

This thesis aims to elaborate on Soviet defensemaking with special attention to the process of evolution that characterized civil-military relations from Leonid I. Brezhnev and his successors up to Mikhail S. Gorbachev inclusive. It attempts an account of how the two parties perceived and responded to the external threats -in particular from the 'West' (the U.S. and NATO)- faced by the Union since the mid-1960s and how the military endeavored to prevail in intrabureaucratic discussions in order to have a major say in the formulation of Soviet foreign policy.



**Keywords: Soviet, Brezhnev, Gorbachev, civil-military, arms control, defense**

# ÖZET

## SOVYET GÜVENLİK POLİTİKASI BAĞLAMINDA SİVİL-ASKER İLİŞKİLERİ: BREJNEV'DEN GORBAÇEV'E

**PAKİN, ESRA**

Uluslararası İlişkiler Yüksek Lisans

Tez Danışmanı: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Nur Bilge Criss

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Bu tez Breznev'den Gorbaçev'e kadar geçen zaman içerisindeki Sovyet güvenlik politikasını irdelerken, sivil-asker ilişkilerindeki evrimsel sürece dikkat çekmektedir. Çalışma, her iki kesimin 1960'ların ortalarından başlayarak Sovyetler Birliği'ne yönelik, özellikle 'Batı'dan (Amerika ve NATO) kaynaklanan dış tehditleri ne şekilde algıladığını ve bunlara karşı nasıl hareket ettiğini betimlemekte ve askeriyenin, Sovyet dış politikasının belirlenmesinde etkin söz sahibi olma girişimlerini aktarmaktadır.

**Anahtar kelimeler: Sovyet, Brejnev, Gorbaçev, sivil-asker, silah kontrolü, savunma**

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# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. The aim of research

In the present study, "civil-military relations" concern the exercise of influence on issues of mutual interest by the civilian and military leadership and display variation from country to country depending on the issues and their timing. The purpose of this research is to track the extent of military participation in the Soviet defensemaking process. It narrates the strains that the political leadership brought in the civil-military relations elaborating on the nature of agitation and adjustment during the period under review.

## 1.2. The conceptual and methodological framework

Written within the confines of historical-comparative research, this study is not exhaustive in its coverage of issues and personalities.[1] While describing events

[1] It is also beyond the scope of this research to analyze and/or criticize the existing models and theories on civil-military relations. However, brief information on the literature would suffice for the interested reader.
Huntington draws a distinction between subjective and objective control as an underlying analytical framework. In the subjective control model, the civilian leadership seeks to maximize its power by establishing mechanisms of civilian control throughout the military. By contrast, in the objective control model, the civilian leadership endows the military with considerable autonomy in its missions, therefore avoids any interference by the officers in the sphere of politics. According to Huntington, subjective control was dominant in communist systems whereas the latter was more observable in democratic systems. For detailed information see Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1957). For a critique of this approach see David E. Albright, "A Comparative Conceptualization of Civil-Military Relations," *World Politics,* Vol. 32, No. 4, (July 1980), pp. 553-576.
Kolkowicz sees the Soviet defense making process as a zero-sum game between civilian and military elites. A conflict-prone relationship was perennial between the Communist Party and the Soviet military due to divergence in values, interests and styles. See Roman Kolkowicz, *The Soviet Military and the Communist Party*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967). Later works of Kolkowicz point to a deviation from this argument and depict some degree of rapport between the civilian and military leadership. See especially Roman Kolkowicz, "Toward a Theory of Civil–Military Relations in Communist (Hegemonial) Systems," in Roman Kolkowicz and Andrejz Korbonski, eds., *Soldiers, Peasants and Bureaucrats*, (Boston: George Allen and Unwin, 1982).

on a selective basis, it mainly seeks to provide a picture of the main decisionmakers and their role in framing and implementing policies. For the uninformed reader, detailed illustrations of the military and political infrastructure of the Soviet Union, can be found in the Appendices.[2]

So as to make the work manageable and bring order to the inquiry, two interrelated factors among many were selected as indicators of leadership influence: arms control and resource allocation. Given the fact that these variables had considerable impact on the Soviet national security process, it was thought that this perspective would permit a more systematic narration in an in-depth manner.

In approaching the case at hand, emphasis rests on individual actors. While bearing in mind that decisions are heavily influenced by the institutional framework

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William E. Odom observes convergence rather than conflict between the two entities. Despite occasional instances of opinion differences, consensus is considered to be a highly likely outcome. For more details see especially William E. Odom, "A Dissenting View on the Group Approach to Soviet Politics," *World Politics*, Vol. 28, No. 4, (July 1976), pp. 542-567.

Timothy J. Colton observes interaction between the two poles and highlights bargaining and political maneuvering among the parties while defense policies are formulated. For further elaboration see Timothy J. Colton, "Perspectives on Civil-Military Relations in the Soviet Union," in Timothy J. Colton and Thane Gustafson, eds., *Soldiers and the Soviet State*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990) and Timothy J. Colton, *Commissars, Commanders and Civilian Authority*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979).

Condoleezza Rice shares a similar approach in her study of civil-military relations in the Soviet Union. "Loose coupling," a model derived from the organizational theory literature and first applied to the Soviet case by Rice, describes a hierarchical relationship between civil and military authority in which decisions are made by the former to be implemented by the latter. The arenas within which the military can wield influence are limited to matters of organization, strategy and force posture, whereas on the issues of threat assessment and calculation of social costs et cetera the civilian leadership assumes priority. "Loose coupling" refers to the lack of any serious threat by the military to the civilian rule. Nevertheless, in cases of any interference by the military in political matters, the civilian authority reserves the right to maintain the balance through removing the agitators from the decision making process. See Condoleezza Rice, "The Party, the Military and Decision Authority in the Soviet Union," *World Politics*, Vol. 40, No. 1, (October 1987), pp. 55-81.

For a concise summary and analysis of these approaches see Amos Perlmutter and William M. LeoGrande, " The Party in Uniform: Toward A Theory of Civil-Military Relations in Communist Political Systems," *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 76, Issue 4, (December 1982), pp. 778-789; John W. R. Lepingwell, "Soviet Civil-Military Relations and the August Coup," *World Politics*, Vol. 44, No. 4, (July 1992), pp. 539-572 and Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).

[2] Two other valuable sources complementary to the present study are *Civil-Military Relations: A Dictionary (English-Russian),* DCAF Document No. 2, (Geneva, March 2002). Available at http://www.dcaf.ch/publications/DCAF_Documents/e-r_dictionary.pdf and *Russko-Angliiskii Voenno-Politicheskii Slovar',* DKVS Dokument No. 2, (Geneva, March 2002). Available at http://www.dcaf.ch/publications/DCAF_Documents/r-e_dictionary.pdf.

within which they are formulated and put into practice, it is contended that individuals can play a substantial role in shaping the decisionmaking process.

Accordingly, "the top military leadership" in the Soviet Union will refer to the two most important decisionmakers in the Soviet Armed Forces: the defense minister and chief of the General Staff (who also served as the first deputy defense minister).[3] Parenthetically, just because the top military officers advocate a certain set of policies it does not follow that the officers beneath them share their views. However, calculating the extent of support for the country's top military officers within the military is problematic. The same concern is also valid for the civilian establishment, bearing in mind a vast conglomeration of people involving scientists, intellectuals, national elites in the republics and others, each with a different interest of their own.

Therefore, the choice was made in favor of the defense minister and the chief of staff since they were the most influential in deciding the military's interests and in overseeing the implementation of policies approved by the political leadership. Likewise, the "top civilian/political leadership" will refer to the principal decisionmaker in the Soviet political system: the general secretary.[4] Documentation

[3] I am indebted to Dale R. Herspring's *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990) for inspiration. This work is the first in-depth analysis of the evolution of the Soviet high command (referring to the dominant group within the upper ranks of the professional officer corps) within the specified period. However, the present study takes its point of departure as 1964, the very beginning of Brezhnev's tenure and ends with the August coup of 1991 when Gorbachev resigned his post as general secretary. Accordingly, the defense ministers under scrutiny include, Rodion Ya. Malinovskii (1957-1967), Andrei A. Grechko (1967-1976), Dmitrii F. Ustinov (1976-1984), Sergei L. Sokolov (1984-1987) and Dmitrii T. Yazov (1987-1991). The chiefs of staff include Matvei V. Zakharov (1960-1963 and 1964-1971), Viktor G. Kulikov (1971-1977), Nikolai V. Ogarkov (1977-1984), Sergei F. Akhromeyev (1984-1988) and Mikhail A. Moiseyev (1988-1991).

[4] "General secretary" is the title of the head of the Communist Party Secretariat, who presides over the Politburo and has been the Soviet Union's de facto supreme leader. Joseph V. Stalin became general secretary of the Russian Communist Party (Bolshevik) in 1922. After Stalin's death in 1953, the title was changed to first secretary, which was used by Nikita S. Khrushchev and Leonid I. Brezhnev until 1966. At that date, the title of the general secretary was reinstituted. Brezhnev's successors –Yuri V. Andropov, Konstantin U. Chernenko and Mikhail S. Gorbachev- were all general secretaries.

of conflict will be confined to differences of opinion between the party leader and his two military counterparts only.[5]

### 1.3. Sources

It is a well-acknowledged trait of Soviet politics that, suppressing information about differences of opinion and interest is an old tradition that obstructs availability of data about the personalities prevailed in controversies and content of the arguments. Therefore, the present author is handicapped from the beginning given the paucity of sources and studies on civil-military relations in the late-Soviet period. However, contributions by a variety of specialized Western publications are appreciated and given due credit since their findings are of analytic importance in their own right.[6]

This study's treatment of Soviet defense relies heavily on secondary sources in English, written through a close reading of the leaderships' key pronouncements, books and pamphlets and of articles which appeared in the most important Soviet political-military newspapers *Pravda* (daily newspaper published by the Central

[5] It is of utmost importance not to refer to the armed forces, the security police and the defense industry in the same vein. Though the KGB (or Committee on State Security), like the military, controls armed units and key security resources the two have distinct missions, histories and skills. Likewise, the organizational structure and concerns of the defense industry do not match with those of the military. The members of the military-industrial sector are above all senior economic administrators and not military personnel dedicated to the development and manufacture of armaments. For detailed information see Amy Knight, "The KGB and Civil-Military Relations," and Julian Cooper, "The Defense Industry and Civil-Military Relations," in Timothy J. Colton and Thane Gustafson, eds., *Soldiers and the Soviet State*, (Princeton: Princeton University, 1990). An interesting article on the relationship between the armed forces and defense industry on designing the military-technical policy is David Holloway, "Technology and Political Decision in Soviet Armaments Policy," *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 11, Issue 4, (1974), pp. 257-279.

[6] As a reply to the suggestion that most of what was written on the Soviet state was meant primarily to mislead foreign readers, James McConnell argues that, despite "misleading statements and guarded language…the substance of the message [was] not affected [for] the Kremlin [could] not afford to deceive its own cadres." Put in other words, the author believes there was little disinformation in the Soviet press. For an extensive discussion see James McConnell, "Shifts in Soviet Views on the Proper Focus of Military Development," *World Politics*, Vol. 37, No. 3, (April 1985), pp. 317-347. The reliability of data, particularly on the size of military budget is another problematique. One explanation of the valuation of the GNP and military expenditure of the Soviet Union see *The Military Balance 1970-1971* (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1970), pp. 10-12.

Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union), *Izvestiia* (daily newspaper published by the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union) and *Krasnaya zvezda* (daily newspaper published by the Ministry of Defense) and journals *Kommunist* (the leading theoretical and political journal of the Central Committee of the Communist Party), *Kommunist vooruzhennykh sil* (the leading journal of the Main Political Administration of the Army and Fleet) and *Voenno-istoricheskii zhurnal* (the journal of the Ministry of Defense).[7] The author also made use of a number of Russian sources on hand as well as translating them into English.

### 1.4. Synopsis[8]

#### 1.4.1. The Brezhnev era (1964-1982)

The so-called "golden age" in the realm of Soviet civil-military relations began with Leonid I. Brezhnev's accession to the post of general secretary. Cordiality became the watchword that characterized civil-military interactions until the early 1970s. Within the subject period, setting up a strong defense against external threats was the common denominator under which civilian and military elites united. Brezhnev called for intensive and disciplined work to strengthen the Soviet armed forces. Moreover, the presence of the military was institutionalized in the Politburo through which the uniformed officers obtained a direct voice in policymaking.

From 1970 on, the "golden age" was drawing to a close. Now that the Soviet Union achieved strategic parity with the U.S., and that the fallacy behind the idea of

[7] In general, articles by the defense minister appeared in *Pravda*. However, the defense minister would also publish articles in other two newspapers. Among the journals, *Kommunist* tended to contain the most significant articles. Usually, one *Kommunist* article per year, mostly in February or March was devoted to military affairs and was authored by the defense minister or chief of staff on key issues regarding the Soviet Armed Forces.

[8] A valuable source in Russian, though mainly concerns the Russian Federation, allocates a few pages summarizing the civil-military relations in the Soviet Union. See Aleksandr Vladimirov, *Voennaya Reforma v Rossii*, (Moscow: Yukea, 2000), pp. 170-173.

the winnability of a nuclear war seemed to have been acknowledged by the two superpowers, the civilian leadership considered it best to divert attention to the debilitating problem of consumer expectations. In consequence, Brezhnev publicly declared that he was prepared to redefine defense policy priorities at the expense of military's interests. The military leadership, who were constantly warning against imperialist designs aimed at the collapse of communism, did not hesitate to articulate their indictment of "Brezhnevism," that was gradually turning into a personality cult. Patronage politics marked the day, by means of which people with non-militaristic views were chosen for defense agenda-setting and policy formulation. His tenure ended, leaving behind a number of arms limitation treaties, yet an ailing economy and a corrupt bureaucracy.

### 1.4.2. The Andropov-Chernenko interregnum (1982-1984/1984-1985)

The "interregnum" following Brezhnev's death saw the brief secrataryships of Yuri V. Andropov and Konstantin U. Chernenko which lasted fifteen and thirteen months respectively. Both adhered to the belief that détente was a long-term trend and zealously embarked on imposing further cuts on the defense budget.

Initially, Andropov adopted a propitiating stance toward the military. Later on, to the disappointment of the high command, he assigned priority to anti-corruption campaigns and the development of consumer goods production. Though the military leadership seemed content with the extensive upgrading of Soviet forces, their resentment against the decade-long freeze on expenditures for procurement had long reached its peak. In consequence, Andropov, interpreting military's assertiveness as encroachment over the civilian leadership's prerogatives, buttressed

the authority of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the realm of defense policy making.

Chernenko proved to be the least concerned about the imperialist threat, accentuating diplomatic negotiation and a more peaceful international posture. Following his predecessors, Chernenko corroborated the importance of military spending at the outset of his tenure. Nevertheless, he demoted the issue to second place since consumer satisfaction soon ranked top on his security agenda.

### 1.4.3. The Gorbachev era (1985-1991)

Soviet security policy since 1985 was mainly designed at the hands of civilian authorities favoring the liberal approach. Accordingly, the Gorbachev period witnessed painful reductions in national sources allotted to defense, cancellation of major weapons programs and increased diversion of military industrial capacity to civil production. To make matters worse, for the first time in history, the military had to endure close public scrutiny of its portrayal of threats, its resource demands and its activities. In general, the military consented to Gorbachev's arms control policy, albeit unwillingly. Their reservations stemmed from such aspects as unilateral cuts on a massive level and intrusive verification measures.

Increased control over the military establishment by both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a reinvigorated Parliament added insult to injury. Deprived of the earlier autonomy rendering them vocal in defensemaking, the military was almost forced to recognize civilian authority. This stance signified the first serious fissures in civil-military relations leading to heightened tension in winter 1990-1991 and early spring 1991. Being ardent followers of the socialist cause, the military leadership denounced democratic initiatives as these attempted to change the existing

political structure. The crisis eventually culminated into the abortive August 1991 coup, regarded as a turning point in the development of Soviet civil-military relations since it pointed to the military's first, yet polemical, intervention in Soviet politics. Instigated by the KGB and the Ministry of Internal Affairs together with conservative groups within the Communist Party, the coup was supported only half-heartedly by the military displaying the latter's loyalty to civilian authority. Nevertheless, the incident paved the way for the formulation and implementation of new military reforms. Unfortunately, the proclamation of the "Commonwealth of Independent States" in December 1991 would halt the attempt to more concretely bind the armed forces to the Soviet state.

# CHAPTER II

# THE BREZHNEV ERA (1964-1982)

## 2.1. The "Golden Age" of civil-military relations

Upon Brezhnev's elevation to the post of general secretary, the high command had every reason to hope that his advent would lead to a substantial improvement in civil-military relations.[9] Still in the process of consolidating his personal power, Brezhnev seemed congenial to military interests as could be observed in his oft-pronounced commitment to a massive conventional and nuclear buildup in armed forces. Just at the outset of his tenure, Brezhnev gave public reassurances to "strengthen the country's defense stability."[10] Remarking that past experience taught vigilance to bolster peace, he displayed the willingness with which he would pursue an all-service buildup.[11] While favoring an expanded military budget, Brezhnev was also a proponent of giving due credit to military's preferences and priorities on concept and program formulation out of respect for the institution's status and freedom of action.

The Party leader's receptivity to military participation in security policy making appealed to the high command who believed that a major expansion of the military establishment was crucial to deter foreign attack and put the Soviet Union on

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[9] For a detailed examination of the military trends of the Khrushchev period see Thomas W. Wolfe, *Soviet Strategy at the Crossroads*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1964). For a discussion of the factors that led to Khrushchev's deposition see Abraham Brumberg, "The Fall of Khrushchev-Causes and Repercussions," in John W. Strong, *The Soviet Union under Brezhnev and Kosygin*, (New York: D.Van Nostrand Company, 1971), pp. 1-15 and William J. Tompson, "The Fall of Nikita Khrushchev," *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 6, (1991), pp. 1101-1121.

[10] *Pravda*, December 10, 1964, quoted in Thomas W. Wolfe, "Problems of Defense Policy Under the New Regime," *Slavic Review*, Vol. 24, Issue 2, (June 1965), p. 176.

[11] L. I. Brezhnev, *Leninskim Kursom*, Vol. 1, (Moscow: Politizdat, 1973-1982), p. 160-162 quoted in Bruce Parrott, "Political Change and Civil-Military Relations," in Timothy Colton and Thane Gustafson eds., *Soldiers and the Soviet State*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. 47.

par with the U.S. regarding strategic and conventional capabilities. The Defense Minister, Marshal Rodion Malinovskii, and the Chief of Staff, Marshal Matvei Zakharov who had long inveighed against "subjective" formulation of defense policy associated with the civilian leadership in the Khrushchev era, articulated repetitively their praise for Brezhnev's paying greater heed to professional military advice. According to Zakharov, the high command's aspirations for all-around bolstering of the Soviet military posture were finally to be realized.[12] Malinovskii's report at the 23rd Party Congress[13] in April 1966 acclaimed the "special importance" attached to developing mobile land-based missiles for further diversification of the Soviet strategic potential.[14]

### 2.2. First signs of discord on arms control

After Malinovskii's death in the spring of 1967, the appointment of Marshal Andrei Grechko as his successor flattered the army's pride while heralding a more energetic officer to the post. Nevertheless, the changeover would soon cause the first clouds to appear on the horizon since the new Defense Minister disfavored any consideration of the recent U.S. attempts to enter into strategic arms negotiations.

[12] Thomas W. Wolfe, "Problems of Defense Policy Under the New Regime," pp. 178-180, also see *Krasnaya zvezda*, February 4, 1965 quoted in Robin Edmonds, *Soviet Policy: The Brezhnev Years*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983). p. 38 and M. V. Zakharov, "Imperative Demand of Our Times," *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, Vol. 17, No. 6, pp. 13-15 quoted in Dan L. Strode and Rebecca Strode, "Diplomacy and Defense in Soviet National Security Policy," *International Security*, Vol. 8, No. 2, (Fall 1983), p. 113.

[13] The party congress was defined as the "supreme organ" of the CPSU. In effect, it was less than a "supreme organ" in practice. The large number of delegates and the relative infrequency of the congresses made this body subsidiary to the Central Committee (q.v.) and the Politburo (q.v.). Since the mid-1950s, congresses were to be held every five years. It normally met for about a week. The most important event occurred when the general secretary delivered the political report on the state of the party, reviewed Soviet economic and foreign policy over the preceding five years, cited achievements and problems of the world communist movement, and delivered a prospectus for the next five years. In another important speech, the chairman of the Council of Ministers presented the targets for the next five-year plan. Next, shorter speeches followed. While in session, the party congress voted on several kinds of issues. All decisions were unanimous. Most significantly, the party congress formally elected the members of the Central Committee, which it charged to govern the party for the next five years.

[14] *Krasnaya zvezda*, April 2, 1966 quoted in Thomas W. Wolfe, "Evolution of Soviet Military Policy," in John W. Strong, ed., *The Soviet Union Under Brezhnev and Kosygin*, p. 79.

Unlike Malinovskii and Zakharov, who mostly concentrated their interests on personnel-related problems and saw no reason for meddling into political issues such as arms control and the budget (since their demands were being met at the time), Grechko soon proved to be unyielding in his views. His concern stemmed from the possibility that, endorsement by the Brezhnev leadership of arms control agreements would eventuate in cutbacks in the military budget.[15]

The signing of the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (NBT) in August 1963 - brought into force in 1970- had been the first step in arms limitation, prohibiting nuclear tests in the atmosphere, outer space and under water. To the dislike of Grechko, morever, President Lyndon Johnson of the United States had no intention to give up rallying the governments of the two superpowers round the cause of what came to be known as SALT (Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty) talks[16]. Grechko's mistrust of the SALT process would not help block its initiation despite his diligent pursuit of a campaign designed, at least, to delay the negotiations.[17] In February 1968, he delivered an admonitory speech claiming that "American imperialism" constituted the major source of "war and aggression" and called for increased watchfulness in dealing with the U.S.[18]

On 1 July 1968, however, the three signatories to the earlier NBT, namely, Great Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States concluded the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Accordingly, each signatory (43 countries on the whole) undertook not to transfer nuclear weapons or control over such weapons to any recipient and not to assist in or encourage their manufacturing. The

[15] This paragraph is based upon Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, pp. 51-75 and Bruce Parrott, "Political Change and Civil-Military Relations", pp. 44-49.
[16] A strategic weapon is one that can deliver a nuclear warhead to the territory of the enemy.
[17] Robin Edmonds, *Soviet Policy: The Brezhnev Years*, pp. 74-76. For an account of the opening of the talks and the proceedings see Sidney I. Ploss, "Soviet Politics on the Eve of the 24th Party Congress," *World Politics*, Vol. 23, Issue 1, (October 1970), pp. 61-82.
[18] *Pravda*, February 24, 1968 quoted in Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, p. 75.

participants also agreed on accepting certain provisions designed to prevent abusive usage of nuclear energy. Unconvinced, Grechko continued his assault on the U.S., asserting that it should admit its liabilities regarding the "military provocation and adventures" pursued in other countries. As he claimed, much remained to be done in the sphere of Soviet military modernization despite impressive gains the armed forces had made by that time. Despite his efforts, the two superpowers initiated the SALT talks in Helsinki in November 1969. By the time the negotiators began deliberations, the Soviet Union had nearly closed the gap with the U.S. on quantitative terms. From Brezhnev's standpoint, the SALT process was a chance to i) reach strategic parity with the U.S., ii) add momentum to the policy of deténte with the U.S., iii) reap long-term economic benefits through opening of western markets, iv) preclude a possible Sino-American rapprochement.[19]

Grechko, who believed that the Soviet security policy had traditionally been a matter for the high command, was determined to protect the military's prerogative in its formulation. Though the General Staff[20] was a direct participant in the SALT process, being the exclusive authority in providing the necessary military-technical

[19]Robin Edmonds, *Soviet Policy: The Brezhnev Years*; *Kommunist*, No. 3, (February 1969), p. 21 quoted in Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, p. 76; Alvin Z. Rubinstein, *Soviet Foreign Policy Since World War II: Imperial and Global*, 4th edition, (New York: Harper and Collins Publishers Inc., 1992), pp. 239-240. Beginning in the second half of the 1960s up to early 1970s the Soviet strategic nuclear arsenal not only witnessed a substantial numerical expansion, but also saw the introduction and application of such advanced technologies as multiple independently-targetable reentry vehicles (MIRVs), mobile missile launchers and sophisticated stellar-navigational systems. The Soviets procured hundreds of second- and third-generation long-range missile systems powered by storable liquid fuel, which guaranteed a higher degree of readiness. They also built ballistic missile submarines to be utilized as launch platforms for nuclear weapons. Warhead production, command-and-control arrangements and early warning systems were also upgraded. See Coit D. Blacker, *Hostage to Revolution*, (New York: Council on Foreign Relations Press, 1993).

[20] The Ministry of Defense was the primary government agency responsible for the implementation of CPSU military policy. Although technically the Ministry was a government agency, it stood apart from other ministries by virtue of the fact that it was dominated by the military. The General Staff was the main planning and executive organ of the Ministry of Defense, manned entirely by officers. It performed strategic and operational research and planning, provided strategic military intelligence and analysis to the Defense Council (q.v.), dealt with foreign military attachés and gave occasional press briefings on political-military issues. See Appendix B.

data to conduct negotiations, Grechko made every personal effort to discredit civilian views and minimize losses on the Soviet side.[21]

### 2.3. Brezhnev holds onto power: the beginning of a personality cult

Grechko and Brezhnev converged on the point that a strong military was an inseparable element of the Soviet superpower status. Yet, the key bone of contention was that, while the Defense Minister was against curbing the military budget since this would lead to technical inferiority, the General Secretary advocated the idea that further involvement of scientists in the nonmilitary sector would contribute to the benefit of the overall economy which, in turn, would result in a higher rate of military investment. The problem was not one of divergence over the goal of bolstering Soviet security but over the means by which this goal could be accomplished.[22]

The underlying motive of Brezhnev's rapprochement with America was the need to sacrifice long-term growth in heavy-industrial capacity to the short-term requirements of agriculture and light industry in the hope of meeting consumer demands. Accordingly, if military tensions were eased, then the money saved could be directed to the cause of consumer satisfaction. The Party leader, having seen the bitter ramifications of an increased military budget, took a firm decision to allocate more resources to civilian production especially in the domain of agriculture. When, in the early 1970s, the economy was further beset by adverse weather conditions, a falling demographic curve and the added costs involved in the extraction of

[21] Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, p. 77.
[22] Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, p. 103.

inaccessible raw materials (oil in particular), Brezhnev hastened to seize the reins in the realm of policymaking.[23]

In fact, he had already embarked on this project as early as December 1969 when, at the Plenum of the Central Committee[24], he expanded his stature in the industrial-administrative decisionmaking. It was also him, not the Chairman Alexei Kosygin that delivered the main speech to the Council of Ministers[25] in June 1970. Later the same year, Brezhnev alone signed the directives of the Ninth Five-Year Plan (1971-1975). These were also the years when he began to take the initiative in foreign affairs, finally assuming in 1971, personal direction of Soviet-American relations. In accord with these, Brezhnev threw his full weight to the solution of the agricultural problem. At the July 1970 Plenum, funds allocated to agricultural development were increased by 70 percent. Additionally, a major new program was launched in January 1971 for the industrialization of animal husbandry. A climactic

[23] Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, pp. 78-79, 102-103. Brezhnev regarded agriculture as "an extensive, vitally important branch of the national economy" and " a great political task of the whole Party and the whole state." See L. I. Brezhnev, "On Progress in Implementing the Decisions of the 23rd Congress and the Plenary Meeting of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on Problems of Agriculture," October 30, 1968 in L. I. Brezhnev, *Following Lenin's Course*, trans. Y. Davydov, (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1972), pp. 103, 117. See Appendix A for numerical data on Soviet economic growth. Also see Peter Rutland, " Economic Management and Reform" in Stephen White, Alex Pravda and Zvi Gitelman, eds., *Developments in Soviet Politics*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), p. 161.

[24] The Central Committee met at least once every six months in plenary session. Between party congresses, the Central Committee was required to direct all activities of the party and the local party organs, carry out the recruitment and the assignment of leading cadres, direct the work of the central governmental and social organization of the workers, create various organs, institutions and enterprises of the party and supervise their activities, name the editorial staff of central newspapers and journals working under its auspices, disburse funds of the party budget and verify their accounting. See Appendix B.

[25] The highest executive and administrative body of the Soviet Union. Its chairman was called 'premier' in Western parlance. It directed most day-to-day state activities. Among the formal powers of the Council of Ministers in the realm of foreign affairs were the prerogatives to grant and withdraw recognition of foreign states, to establish or break diplomatic relations, to order acts of reprisal, to appoint negotiators and supervise the conduct of negotiations, to conclude "executive arrangements" not requiring executive ratification, and to appoint, supervise and direct Soviet diplomatic representatives abroad. Real authority rests with the Presidium, a smaller working group of senior officials. See Appendix B.

decision came in April 1971 when targets and funds for agricultural complexes were announced to be doubled.[26]

As Brezhnev declared at the 24th Party Congress, in accord with his "Peace Program," consumer industries (or Group B industries in Soviet parlance) would be given priority over Group A industries, namely the heavy and defense industries. The Party leader's propounded explanation was that, although imperialism was "reactionary and aggressive," an improvement in relations between the Soviet Union and the U.S. was possible since Soviet policy was based on the principles "of peaceful existence, of developing mutually advantageous ties and of cooperating with all states ready to do so in strengthening peace and making relations with them as stable as possible."[27] This move was a complete reversal of the policy choice Brezhnev articulated in a speech in February 1968 that underscored " the accelerated development of heavy industry as the basis of [Soviet] industrial might."[28]

Though the final resolution of the Congress ensured that "the strengthening of the might and preparedness of the Soviet armed forces [would] remain at the center of the Party attention," -a decision taken presumably on account of another potential threat at that moment from China, which was conducting hostile propaganda against the Soviets and making territorial claims on the Soviet state- it failed to assuage the

[26] Bruce Parrott, "Political Change and Civil-Military Relations", pp. 52-52, 247; George W. Breslauer, *Khrushchev and Brezhnev as Leaders: Building Authority in Politics*, (London: George Allen and Unwin Publications, Ltd., 1982), p. 194. For more on how Brezhnev strengthened his position through the easing out of hostile incumbents and the promotion of reliable subordinates see John P. Willerton, Jr., "Patronage Networks and Coalition Building in the Brezhnev Era," *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 2, (April 1987), pp. 175-204.

[27] L. I. Brezhnev, "Report of the CPSU Central Committee of the 24th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union," 30 March 1971 quoted in Janis Sapiets, "The 24th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party," *Russian Review*, Vol. 31, Issue 1, (January 1972), pp. 15-19.

[28] Brezhnev's speech in Leningrad on February 16, 1968, recorded by Western monitors of Soviet broadcasts quoted in Sidney I. Ploss, "Soviet Politics on the Eve of 24th Party Congress," *World Politics*, Vol. 23, Issue 1, (October 1970), p. 64.

military's surmounting worries over the direction in which the civilian leadership was taking the country.[29]

### 2.4. The military strikes back

For its part, the military had no intention to admit defeat in this protracted struggle over who would prevail in defense policymaking. Zakharov sided with Grechko in an article he wrote shortly before leaving the post as chief of staff. There he accentuated his observations on a continued arms race driven by a "bloc" of imperialists.[30] Soon Grechko followed, warning against "the danger of a new war."[31]

Grechko's vociferous criticism against the SALT package reached its peak in 1972 when he denounced the U.S. for "breaking the norms of international law and complicating the international situation."[32] The Defense Minister was not alone in his remonstration against U.S. aggression. Viktor Kulikov, who had replaced Zakharov in 1971, soon proved to be more outspoken on political issues than his predecessor. While commenting upon deténte Kulikov often reiterated the military nature of imperialism and mostly spoke negatively on the SALT negotiations.[33]

Nevertheless, the clash of interests did not precipitate a serious rupture in civil-military relations. Grechko gave the initial signs of a lukewarm support of the civilian stance on arms control. Yet, he did not refrain from labeling imperialism as "malicious and perfidious […] ready to commit any crime for the sake of its

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[29] Janis Sapiets, "The 24th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party", pp. 14-20.
[30] *Izvestiia*, June 22, 1971 quoted in Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, p.107.
[31] A. Grechko, *On Guard for Peace and the Building of Communism*, trans. Joint Publications Research Service, 54602, December 2, 1971 of the original Russian *Na strazhe mira: stroitel'stva Kommunizma* (Moscow: Military Publishing House, 1971) quoted in Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, p. 107.
[32] *Pravda*, February 23, 1972 quoted in Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, p. 108.
[33] *Izvestiia*, February 23, 1972 quoted in Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, p. 108.

mercenary interests."[34] Under the constraints of the party discipline and upon consideration that close contact with the West would at least provide easy access to modern technology to upgrade Soviet armed forces, Grechko thought it tenable to make some concessions.[35]

A remarkable event in spring 1972 raised hopes about enhanced political collaboration between the civilian and military leadership. As the date was nearing the completion of SALT I negotiations, Brezhnev, accompanied by Grechko, conveyed an address at a meeting of the high command offering justifications for his security policy.[36] In return, the gesture was highly praised by the defense minister.[37] As a result, conditioning their support for the SALT I on continued strengthening of the armed forces, Grechko and Kulikov fully endorsed the accords.

According to SALT I, the two strategic arms agreements concluded in May 1972 were the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM) and the Interim Agreement (to last five years) on certain measures with respect to the limitation of strategic offensive arms. Overall, the provisions of the SALT accords which prescribed the number of intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) launchers and missiles aboard nuclear submarines granted the Soviets numerical superiority over the U.S. Yet, the Soviets were deprived of the single most promising technology (ABM-related technologies) for alleviating the destructive consequences in case of a nuclear war. To the further disadvantage of the Soviets, American superiority over strategic bombers and Forward-Based Systems (FBS-the French and British nuclear delivery systems and the U.S. land- and carrier-based nuclear weapons in Europe)

[34] *Kommunist*, No. 4, (March 1971) quoted in Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, pp. 107-109.
[35] Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989,* p. 114; Bruce Parrott, "Political Change and Civil-Military Relations", pp. 52-53.
[36] *Pravda*, April 26, 1972 quoted in Bruce Parrott, "Political Change and Civil-Military Relations", p. 53.
[37] *Pravda*, May 9, 1972 quoted in Bruce Parrott, "Political Change and Civil-Military Relations", p. 53.

persisted since these issues were not covered during the SALT process. On the issue of control, "national technical means of verification" was specified meaning, in essence, satellite observation, which obviated the need for inspectors on subject territories.[38]

Nonetheless, the conclusion of negotiations worked against the expectations for a long-term amity in civil-military relations. The aftermath of the SALT process indicated a period of fluctuations on the military's part regarding the assessment of the international arena. In a concerted effort with the new chief of staff, Grechko began to pronounce more acrimonious statements about the accords, demonstrating his suspicion of the reliability of treaties "to eliminate the danger of nuclear war."[39] The Defense Minister's view was countered by Brezhnev who expressed his trust for the treaties, claiming that peaceful coexistence was the foundation upon which bilateral relations rested in a nuclear age.[40] Grechko did not hesitate to continue his assault on the U.S. charging the country with an enthusiasm to break the détente and return to the "time of the cold war."[41]

During a national conference of military party secretaries in March 1973, when Brezhnev reaffirmed the Party's "sacred obligation" to guarantee the comprehensive upgrading of the armed forces, the Defense Minister seemed to tone down the criticism in his speech, praising the effective handling of military

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[38] Coit D. Blacker, *Hostage to Revolution*, pp. 24-25; Robin Edmonds, *Soviet Policy: The Brezhnev Years*, pp. 107-111; Harry Gelman, *The Brezhnev Politburo and the Decline of Détente*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), pp. 131-135; Joseph L. Nogee and Robert H. Donaldson, *Soviet Foreign Policy Since World War II*, 3rd edition, (New York: Pergamon Press, Inc., 1988), pp. 280-283; Richard F. Staar, *Foreign Policies of the Soviet Union*, (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1991), pp. 291-292. Another important bilateral agreement concluded in 1972 was the three-year grain agreement aimed at a long-term economic relationship between the two powers. Accordingly, the Soviets were to buy U.S. grown food grains and could pay them in credit.

[39] *Pravda*, September 30, 1972 quoted in Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, p. 109.

[40] L. I. Brezhnev, "Concerning the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics", in L. I. Brezhnev, *Leninskim kursom*, Vol. 4, (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo politicheskoi literatury, 1970), p. 79.

[41] *Pravda*, February 23, 1973 quoted in Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, p. 109.

reconstruction "by the Politburo[42] headed by comrade L. Brezhnev." By this means, the military obtained greater leverage in the highest decisionmaking body over security policy.[43] On several occasions in May, Grechko projected an affirmative stance regarding détente while, between the lines, he touched upon the continuing existence of "reaction and militarism."[44]

To the disappointment of the civilian leadership, however, Kulikov resumed from where Grechko left off. With a hard-nosed approach he frontally rebuked imperialism, showing his distrust against aggressive militancy targeted at curbing the power of the socialist states, above all, the Soviet Union.[45] Grechko soon followed, hardening his position to accuse the forces of imperialism since "despite some relaxation in international relations," the specter of war persisted.[46]

### 2.5. Civilian supremacy reinstated

Against this backdrop, a campaign was launched around 1974 under the auspices of the Main Political Administration (MPA)[47], the principal agency charged with indoctrination of the military cadres. In an attempt to silence the opposition, the initial step taken was the dismissal of personnel sympathizing with military views.

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[42] The Politburo was the central decisionmaking agency concerned with all areas of national importance. It ultimately controlled defense policy, took the major resource allocation decisions, approved budgets and was the final arbiter of any controversies that arose. See Appendix B.

[43] This passage is based upon Bruce Parrott, "Political Change and Civil-Military Relations", p. 54; F. Stephen Larrabee, "Gorbachev and the Soviet Military," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 66, No. 5, (Summer 1988), p. 1003 and Jeremy Azrael, *The Soviet Civilian Leadership and the Military High Command: 1976-1986*, RAND Report R-3521-AF, (June 1987) in Alexander Dallin ed., *Russian and Soviet History: 1500-1991*, Vol. 12, (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1992), p. 166.

[44] *Kommunist*, No. 7, (May 1973) quoted in Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, p. 109.

[45] *Kommunist vooruzhennykh sil*, No. 6, (1973) quoted in Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, p. 109.

[46] *Pravda*, October 8, 1973 quoted in Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, p. 111.

[47] MPA was an organ of the CPSU in the Ministry of Defense and was responsible for conducting ideological indoctrination and propaganda activities to prepare the armed forces for their role in national security. See Appendix B.

Next, a new program was designed to help the officers grasp "the major positive changes" resulting from détente.[48]

The military's deepest fears were finally realized in April 1974, when some 35 million rubles were allotted for the purposes of land reclamation and social development in the Non-Black-Earth Zone.[49] In order to supply sources for these programs, investments in the domains of light and heavy industry were reduced. Moreover, the Soviet government sharply augmented imports of consumer goods, feed-grains and food.[50] Brezhnev would make his point clearer in July when he remarked that "in recent years a quantity of weapons [had] already been amassed sufficient to destroy everything living on earth several times," underlying the new emphasis on serving humanity by drawing more attention to basic needs.[51]

Upon these challenges, Grechko cried out for preparedness in case imperialism, "insistently perfecting its gigantic military machine," would strike unannounced.[52] As he repetitively underlined, the economic and military might of the Soviet Union carried utmost importance in restraining imperialist forces.[53] For him, the view that the growth of Soviet military power could be slowed down without undermining détente was based on total fallacy.

The signing of Vladivostok Accords in November 1974 -the penultimate step toward SALT II- was no less than a slap at the military. According to the provisions,

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[48] Bruce Parrott, "Political Change and Civil-Military Relations", pp. 58-59.
[49] Investment in irrigation and land improvement in the non-black-earth regions of the Soviet Union increased from 5.8 billion rubles (1983 prices) to 8.1 billion between 1975-1984. Nevertheless, the initiative proved to be a costly failure. See Karl-Eugen Wadekin, "Agriculture" in Martin McCauley, ed., *The Soviet Union Under Gorbachev*, (London: MacMillan Press, 1990), p. 125.
[50] George W. Breslauer, *Khruschev and Brezhnev as Leaders: Building Authority in Politics*, p. 250.
[51] *Pravda*, July 22, 1974 quoted in Thomas N. Bjorkman and Thomas J. Zamostny, "Soviet Politics and Strategy Towards the West: Three Cases," *World Politics*, (January 1984), p. 202.
[52] *Krasnaya zvezda*, June 5, 1974 in Timothy J. Colton, "Civil-Military Relations in Soviet Politics," *Current History,* Vol. 67, (October 1974), p. 163, also see A. Grechko, *Vooruzhennye sily Sovetskogo gosudarstva,* (Moscow: Voyenizdat, 1974) quoted in Bruce Parrott, "Political Change and Civil-Military Relations", pp. 56-57.
[53] "Grechko Addresses Kerch Meeting," Kiev domestic service in Russian, September 14, 1974 quoted in Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, p. 105.

the Soviets made major concessions in agreeing to equal levels of strategic forces. Each party was to limit its strategic missile delivery vehicles (land, sea and air-based) to 2,400. Of these, a maximum of 1,320 could be equipped with multiple independently-targetable reentry vehicles (MIRV). This meant considerable advantage to the U.S. since at that time the U.S. had about 850 MIRV-equipped missiles, (that is, capable of carrying more than one nuclear warhead) whereas the Soviet Union had none that was operational. Moreover, as in SALT I, both the FBS and the nuclear forces of the U.S. allies were again excluded from the provisions. Yet, the signatories were authorized to pursue the strategic nuclear developments that were already under way, albeit subject to numerical limitations. To the benefit of the military, however, these provisions were never ratified.[54]

Not surprisingly, Grechko rebuked the civilian leadership for underestimating the secrecy and haste with which the imperialist states pursued their military preparations.[55] The attempt deteriorated the already-tense relations between the General Secretary and his military counterparts. Denying Grechko the opportunity to address the 25th Congress in February-March 1976, Brezhnev proclaimed the triumph of détente and affirmed his intention to search for arms control agreements. Although he pledged that the Party would seek to shore up the defense budget, his success in getting defense industries to play a greater role in the production of consumer goods was noteworthy. In the eyes of Brezhnev, now that the Soviet Union

[54] Robin Edmonds, *Soviet Policy: The Brezhnev Years*, p.146; Harry Gelman, *The Brezhnev Politburo and the Decline of Détente*, p. 161; Alvin Z. Rubinstein, *Soviet Foreign Policy Since World War II: Imperial and Global*, pp. 241-242; Richard F. Staar, *Foreign Policies of the Soviet Union*, p. 293.
[55] A. Grechko, "The Great Victory and Its Historical Lessons", *Problemy mira i sotsializma*, No. 3, (1975) quoted in Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, p. 112.

achieved strategic equivalence with the U.S., it could reduce the rate of military buildup.[56]

Grechko died the next month, leaving the post to Dmitrii Ustinov, a civilian with antimilitaristic views and a longtime ally of the Party leader. He had already been promoted from candidate to full membership of the Politburo at the 25th Party Congress. The choice was interpreted by the high command as a further check on military interests. Nonetheless, Kulikov, undeterred, would continue to caution against overconfidence in détente when he drew attention to the enormous sums the U.S. was spending on its military.[57]

Brezhnev reached the apogee of his political career in 1976 and 1977. On May 9, he was appointed Marshal of the Soviet Union. This was the same date when Brezhnev's chairmanship of the civilian-dominated Defense Council was publicized.[58] He oversaw the construction of a new constitution in 1977, the clauses of which would enable him to remove Nikolai Podgorny as State President[59] and combine the posts of head of state and Party General Secretary. Kulikov's transfer to the post of commander-in-chief of the Warsaw Pact forces in January 1977 further strengthened his stature. Marshal Nikolai Ogarkov, who had been one of the two

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[56] *XXV sezd Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuza: stenograficheskii otchet*, Vol. 1, (Moscow: Politizdat, 1976), pp. 26-27, 43 and *Pravda*, January 29, 1975 and *Kommunist vooruzhennykh sil*, No. 4, (1975) quoted in Bruce Parrott, "Political Change and Civil-Military Relations", pp. 55, 59.

[57] *Pravda*, January 29, 1975 and *Izvestiia*, May 8, 1976 quoted in Bruce Parrott, "Political Change and Civil-Military Relations", pp. 59, 57; *Kommunist*, No. 7, (May 1976) quoted in Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, p. 105; Seweryn Bialer, "The Political System," in Robert Brynes, ed., *After Brezhnev*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), p. 38.

[58] An April 7 review in *Krasnaya zvezda* of the first volume of the *Sovetskaya Voennia Ensiklopediia* has already acknowledged for the first time the existence of the USSR Defense Council as well as Brezhnev's chairmanship. The general secretary of the CPSU was the chairman of the Defense Council. However, no clear information exists on the identification of other members. Defense Council was traditionally a subcommittee of the Politburo. With the advent of the 1977 Constitution, however, it became a state, not a party institution. The Politburo exercised effective decisionmaking power over all aspects of security and foreign policy. Yet, on major security decisions, the Defense Council always had a say in policy formulation. It also dealt with decisions regarding the defense industries, important weapons developments and procurement, budgetary questions and manpower levels. See Appendix B.

[59] The chairman of the Presidium (executive committee) of the Supreme Soviet (the parliament) was called the 'president.' The administrative organs of the Soviet state were responsible to the Supreme Soviet. See Appendix B.

senior representatives at the SALT I talks and displayed a visible sympathy towards Brezhnev's views was concurrently appointed to the vacant position.[60]

Ogarkov, despite his statements on the need for further improvements in Soviet defenses, was sanguine about the prospects of détente. Shortly after taking over as chief of staff, he had referred to the mid-1970s as showing signs of a relaxation in international tensions. Appraising the arms control process, Ogarkov pointed to the disappearance of "the danger of a new world war."[61]

Now that civilian supremacy over the military was established, Brezhnev imposed further budgetary restraint toward defense expenditures. The growth of defense spending was trimmed from an estimated 4-5 percent per year down to about 2 percent. This trend would continue until the early 1980s with almost no increases in spending on military hardware. Nevertheless, since defense spending continued to account for 13-15 percent of the country's GNP, there was every indication that the military establishment enjoyed not a small ration. Moreover, the military growth slowdown did not affect all Soviet weapons programs. Rather, in 1976-77, the deployment of the intermediate-range SS-20 missiles and others on account of intense lobbying by the high command would result in a serious deterioration of détente.[62]

A remarkable event took place on January 18, 1977, in Tula when the civilian leadership avowed that no party could achieve "superiority" through "first-strike"

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[60] Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, p. 121; Ian Derbyshire, *The Politics in the Soviet Union: From Brezhnev to Gorbachev*, (Cambridge: W&R Chambers Ltd., 1987), p. 30.

[61] *Sovietskaia Rossia*, February 23, 1977 quoted in Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967*-1989, pp. 160-161.

[62] Abraham S. Becker, *Ogarkov's Complaint and Gorbachev's Dilemma*, RAND Report R-3541-AF, (December 1987), pp. 4-12 and Richard Kaufman, " Causes of the Slowdown in Soviet Defense," *Soviet Economy*, Vol. 1, No. 1, (January-March 1985), pp. 9-10 quoted in John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: From Brezhnev to Chernenko*, (Boston: Unwin Hyman, Inc., 1990), p. 31. Also see Myron Rush, "Guns over Growth in Soviet Policy," *International Security*, Vol. 7, No. 3, (Winter 1982/1983), pp. 167-179. SS-20 missiles were mobile, solid-fueled, accurate, MIRV'd with three warheads, and had a very rapid reaction time. The range of the Soviet SS-20 was three times that of U.S. single-warhead Pershing-II.

capability.[63] In his proclamation, Brezhnev accentuated a new orientation towards "defensive sufficiency," calling for incremental strategic reductions. The option of being the first to launch a nuclear attack was also discarded. Parenthetically, what Brezhnev meant by the so-called "Tula line" was that the Soviet Union would use nuclear weapons only against "another nuclear power" committing "aggression" through nuclear or non-nuclear means.[64]

A further step toward arms limitation was taken on May 18 in Geneva, when the two superpowers agreed on a common framework for a prospective SALT II. Meanwhile Brezhnev continued to extend his authority when, in June, thanks to the new constitution, he established the supremacy of the Party leader in the Soviet government. In November, Brezhnev was also declared Commander-in-Chief of the Soviet Armed Forces. It seemed as if the overarching power to lay down the parameters of defense policymaking rested solely in the hands of the civilian leadership.[65]

### 2.6. The rift in the military leadership[66]

#### 2.6.1. The Chief of Staff versus Brezhnev

For the first time during the period under review, the Defense Minister and the Chief of Staff began working at cross-purposes. Ogarkov, who had showed a

[63] *Pravda*, January 19, 1977 quoted in James McConnell, " Shifts in Soviet Views on the Proper Focus of Military Development," *World Politics*, Vol. 37, Issue 3, (April 1985), p. 330. 'First strike' refers to a unilateral nuclear attack aimed at preventing the opponent from responding in a way that would inflict comparable damage on the initiating party.
[64] James McConnell, "Shifts in Soviet Views on the Proper Focus of Military Development", p. 331; Jeremy Azrael, *The Soviet Civilian Leadership and the Military High Command: 1976-1986*, pp. 170-171.
[65] Robin Edmonds, *Soviet Policy: The Brezhnev Years*, pp. 158, 162.
[66] This section is based upon Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1976-1989*, pp. 126-127, 154-165 and Jeremy Azrael, *The Soviet Civilian Leadership and the Military High Command: 1976-1986*, p. 173.

discernible approval of détente at the outset, later articulated his mistrust about the international developments and adopted an unvarnished rhetoric toward the U.S.

As a career military officer, traditionally holding a pessimistic stance toward arms limitation, Ogarkov launched a fierce budgetary offensive, making exorbitant resource demands. In May 1977, he had noted that the Soviet army and navy possessed everything necessary to fulfill their tasks.[67] While similar expressions had followed for a year, Ogarkov showed a change of tone in 1979, pointing to the need to devote attention to an imminent scientific-technological revolution in military affairs so as not to lag behind the imperialist forces in arms development. From his standpoint, funds allocated for military research and development had to be massively increased.

One major reason for his alertness was NATO's decision to adopt the Long-Term Development Program in 1978, which had led to the deployment of the Pershing-IIs and ground-launched cruise missiles (GLCM)[68]. This initiative was an outcome of the unallayed concerns of the West, about the appearance during the mid-to-late 1970s of new or improved weapons systems (in particular the Backfire[69], the SS-20 and SS-21s), which attested to a shift away from the Tula line.[70]

### 2.6.2. The Defense Minister-Brezhnev partnership

Dmitrii Ustinov had spent almost his entire career in the Soviet military-industrial complex, but was not a career officer. With a background in management he chose to play the political game and acted with circumspect while expressing his

[67] *Izvestiia*, May 9, 1977 quoted in Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, p. 155.
[68] A cruise missile is a guided missile remaining within the earth's atmosphere, capable of being launched from the ground, aircraft or ships and delivering nuclear warheads with greater accuracy in large numbers, but thus far with much smaller ranges than an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) or intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM).
[69] A supersonic bomber of advanced variable wing design. The Backfire was produced before SALT I, and entered service in 1974 after years of testing and modification.
[70] Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989,* pp. 157, 162.

views. Although, at times, he presented a grim picture of the international arena paralleling that of Ogarkov, Ustinov chose to side with the General Secretary. Therefore, it fell to the Chief of Staff to spell out the need for vigilance against imperialist traps.

As negotiations continued during the SALT II process, the divergence of opinions between the Defense Minister and the Chief of Staff became clearer. In his 1979 *Partiinaia Zhizn'* article, Ogarkov cautioned against inclination to "turn a blind eye" to the "aggressive thrust" of Western military preparations.[71] From Ustinov's viewpoint, however, a "relaxation of tensions" marked the day and the Soviet military was already at a sufficient level to guarantee the security "of the motherland" and of "socialism and communism" whenever conditions necessitated.[72]

### 2.7. Civil-military relations amidst international and domestic turmoil

The five-year moratorium of SALT I had expired in 1977 without a successor agreement. After two years of protracted negotiations in an environment of deteriorating Soviet-American relations, SALT II was signed on 18 June 1979 between the superpowers in Vienna. Nevertheless, it would never be brought into force on account of opposition by the U.S. Senate. However, both the Soviet and the U.S. governments observed its provisions over the next two years. The tripartite treaty included an eight-year compromise, a protocol to last until the end of 1982, and a statement of guidelines for SALT III. To summarize, the numbers of launchers were limited to 2,250 with a sub-ceiling of 1,320 for MIRV-equipped ballistic missile launchers and air-launched cruise missiles (ALCM). Production of new

[71] *Partiinaia Zhizn'*, No. 4, (1979) quoted in Jeremy Azrael, *The Soviet Civilian Leadership and the Military High Command: 1976-1986*, p. 176.
[72] *Kommunist*, No. 3, (1977) quoted in Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, p. 156.

heavy missiles was prohibited. Yet, existing missile systems could be modernized within prescribed limits. As in SALT I, verification of compliance was specified by national technical means. The participants agreed on notifying each other of missile testing and of exchanging information on their nuclear arsenals. The Soviet superiority in ICBM numbers and the U.S. superiority in the total number of warheads continued. However, the Soviet Union was compelled to dismantle more strategic vehicles than the U.S. in order to meet the stated limit. Furthermore, the issue of U.S. theater bombers based in Europe remained unresolved.[73]

Unconvinced about the prospects of SALT II, NATO devised a 'dual-track' scheme, which stipulated that if superpower negotiations on missile deployments backfired, NATO would consider installing new missiles starting late 1983. Accordingly, if negotiations ended in failure, NATO would deploy 572 missiles, 108 of which would be Pershing-II medium-range ballistic missiles. The decision was a response to Moscow's sustained military buildup employed in disguise under the pretext of continuation of programs within restrictions contained in SALT I and II. Western fears deserved credit for, at the urging of Ogarkov, the civilian leadership had sanctioned the establishment of the so-called 'theaters of military operations' TVD-*Teatr Voennykh Deistvii*)[74] to function between various fronts and supreme military headquarters in Moscow. The initiative would continue well into 1984.[75]

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[73] Robin Edmonds, *Soviet Policy: The Brezhnev Years*, p. 164; Joseph L. Nogee and Robert H. Donaldson, *Soviet Foreign Policy Since World War II*, pp. 298-299; Richard F. Staar, *Foreign Policies of the Soviet Union*, p. 294; Alvin Z. Rubinstein, *Soviet Foreign Policy Since World War II: Imperial and Global*, p. 242. Whether or not to include the Backfire among the strategic launchers permitted to the Soviet Union was one of the contentious issues of SALT II, and it was resolved in favor of the Soviet side. Though it was a theater weapon, by refueling in flight, its range could cover targets even in the U.S.

[74] TVD is a Soviet term meaning part of a continent or ocean within which were deployed strategic groupings of armed forces and within which military operations were conducted.

[75] John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: From Brezhnev to Chernenko*, p. 63; Coit D. Blacker, *Hostage to Revolution*, pp. 37-42.

The West would be further alarmed at Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in late December 1979, a decision taken upon consideration that China, Pakistan and the U.S. had joined their efforts to establish a new "anti-Soviet *place d'armes*" on the Soviet-Afghan frontier that would threaten "the very existence of Afghanistan as an independent state."[76]

Anxious about NATO counterdeployments, Brezhnev hastened to take the initiative. In his November 1979 Plenum speech, the Party leader drew attention to the need for improving "the lot of the general populace" at the expense of military spending.[77] This decision almost nearly coincided with the stirrings in Poland, which, in 1980, helped catalyse the domestic food crisis. As the Polish government sought to handle external debts through cutting back food subsidies, discontent eventuated in a wave of strikes, reminding the Soviet civilian leadership that neglect of consumer needs might bring with it severe political repercussions.[78]

Brezhnev conveyed this message clearly in February that, the Soviet Army and Navy had "everything necessary to repulse any type of military provocation."[79] The Defense Minister shared the same viewpoint stating that the West, due to its shrinking opportunities, had finally acknowledged the necessity to abide by the principle of peaceful coexistence.[80] Later in the year though, he would express some concern about imperialist forces, provoking new conflicts in a number of regions.

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[76] *Pravda*, December 29, 1979, quoted in Robin Edmonds, *Soviet Policy: The Brezhnev Years*, pp. 189-190.
[77] *Pravda*, November 29, 1979 quoted in Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, pp. 157-158.
[78] Joseph L. Nogee and Robert H. Donaldson, *Soviet Foreign Policy Since World War II*, pp. 315-316.
[79] *Krasnaya zvezda*, February 23, 1980 quoted in Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989,* p. 158, Robin Edmonds, *Soviet Policy: The Brezhnev Years*, pp. 195-203.
[80] *Pravda*, February 14, 1980 quoted in Jeremy Azrael, *The Soviet Civilian Leadership and the Military High Command: 1976-1986*, p. 180.

However, he would reiterate the viability of détente despite his calling for increased attention to defense needs between the lines.[81]

**2.8. The tenure ends without settlement**

As 1980 proceeded, Ogarkov's critique of civilian leadership did not cease at all. Shortly after the invasion of Afghanistan, he charged the U.S. of making military preparations to achieve superiority over Soviet capabilities. He extended his criticism further when, in May, he spoke of a concerted American-British effort in encouraging the Germans to move against the Soviet Union. Characterizing the 80s with "extreme instability […] and intensification of the aggressive aspirations of the imperialist countries and China," Ogarkov uttered his skepticism regarding the continuity of détente.[82] Later, he also added Japan to the anti-Soviet front, stressing the need for caution against the U.S.-China-Japan alliance, which resembled "the infamous Rome-Berlin-Tokyo axis" of the 1930s.[83]

The battle over resources endured throughout 1981. At the 26th Party Congress, Brezhnev enunciated clearly that "foodstuffs, consumer goods and the services sphere" would receive priority in the upcoming Eleventh Five-Year Plan (1981-85). The General Secretary, admitting that, the U.S. in particular, had become more aggressive, conveyed his belief in the new (Reagan) administration's more realistic attitude toward problems. Brezhnev underscored that Soviet defense spending was at a sufficient level and that arms control was a task of "special meaning and urgency." As he reiterated the necessity to deal with the debilitating

[81] *Pravda*, December 11, 1980 quoted in Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, p. 163.
[82] *Izvestiia*, February 24, 1980; *Komsomolskaia Pravda*, May 9, 1980 and *Krasnaya zvezda*, June 5, 1980 quoted in Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, p. 164.
[83] *Kommunist vooruzhennykh sil*, No. 14, (July 1980) quoted in Jeremy Azrael, *The Soviet Civilian Leadership and the Military High Command: 1976-1986,* p. 180.

food shortages, he called on the military establishment to focus on research and development on behalf of Soviet consumers.[84] Repeating in May his trust in some "sober people among the capitalist leaders," by the end of 1981, Brezhnev commented upon preparedness to take additional steps toward the country's defense in case of any need.[85] His speech to the November 1981 Central Committee Plenum was indicative of a clear insistence on treating the food problem as a "political imperative."[86] Brezhnev's efforts toward the cause of further disarmament bore fruit when, on 30 November, the two superpowers began formal negotiations in Geneva concerning intermediate-range nuclear forces (INF- also known as theatre nuclear forces or Euromissiles) during which the U.S. President Ronald Reagan proposed the so-called 'zero option.' Accordingly, the United States would cancel its deployment of Pershing-IIs and GLCMs if the Soviet Union dismantled its SS-20, SS-4 and SS-5 missiles. Parenthetically, the INF also set the stage for START (Strategic Arms Reduction Talks), the new name accorded to SALT by the Reagan Administration.[87]

The Defense Minister was supportive of civilian leadership. From Ustinov's standpoint, there was no reason to yield to "war hysteria."[88] Attacking the West for relying upon militarism in foreign policymaking, he underlined the defensive nature of Soviet military doctrine, according to which forces were being developed "without going beyond the needs of deterrence."[89] He made it clear that a strong military was

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[84] *Pravda*, February 24, 1981 quoted in Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, p. 193 and *XXVI sezd Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuza: stenograficheskii otchet*, Vol. 1, (Moscow: Politizdat, 1981), pp. 21, 40-45, 60-63.
[85] *Pravda*, May 9, 1981 and *Krasnaya zvezda*, November 3, 1981 quoted in Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, p. 195.
[86] *Pravda*, November 16, 1981 quoted in Jeremy Azrael, *The Soviet Civilian Leadership and the Military High Command: 1976-1986*, p. 182.
[87] Robin Edmonds, *Soviet Policy: The Brezhnev Years*, pp. 167-168; Joseph L. Nogee and Robert H. Donaldson, *Soviet Foreign Policy Since World War II*, p. 328; Alvin Z. Rubinstein, *Soviet Foreign Policy Since World War II: Imperial and Global*, p. 243.
[88] *Pravda*, February 21, 1981 quoted in Jeremy Azrael, *The Soviet Civilian Leadership and the Military High Command: 1976-1986*, p. 179.
[89] *Pravda*, May 9, 1981 quoted in Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, p. 204.

just "one of the tools" for the protection of the Soviet Union and emphasized the need to cooperate with "the peaceloving, realistic circles in the West," arguing that it was possible to negotiate with imperialist forces.[90]

In contradistinction to these views, Ogarkov saw an inhospitable West determined to strengthen its military capabilities across the board. Claiming that the U.S. was expanding its arsenal "not simply to please the military-industrial complex but with the aim of direct war preparation," he expressed a clear worry about the possibility of the breakdown of détente. Moreover, he labeled the "aggressive nature of imperialism" as "unchanging."[91]

In July 1981, Ogarkov delivered another somber assessment of the international situation, conveying his mistrust of the Reagan Administration and NATO. Pointing to the "element of surprise in contemporary war," the chief of staff incessantly demanded wide-ranging measures to better prepare for a prospective war. In effect, the use of nuclear weapons was not Ogarkov's preferred option. Yet, he was convinced that the West would be the first to utilize such weapons.[92] This article constituted a clear violation of protocol since the chief of staff went to considerable lengths in criticizing party propaganda explicitly.[93]

Throughout 1982, Brezhnev continued to voice support for détente, underlining that "not a single ruble more [would] be spent than [was] absolutely necessary" for the country's defense.[94] In his address to the 17th Trade Union Congress on March 16, he took a major step, announcing a unilateral "moratorium on

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[90] *Pravda*, June 22, 1981 quoted in Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, pp. 205-206.
[91] *Krasnaya zvezda*, May 9, 1981 quoted in Jeremy Azrael, *The Soviet Civilian Leadership and the Military High Command*, p. 181, and John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: From Brezhnev to Chernenko*, p. 77.
[92] *Kommunist*, No. 10, (July 1981) quoted in John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: From Brezhnev to Chernenko*, p. 77.
[93] Harry Gelman, *The Brezhnev Politburo and the Decline of Détente*, pp. 180-181.
[94] *Krasnaya zvezda*, March 17, 1982 quoted in Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, p. 195.

the deployment of medium-range nuclear armaments in the European part of the USSR." However, he also assured that retaliatory steps would be taken if the U.S. and NATO went ahead with counterdeployments.[95] On May 18, at the inception of the 19th Komsomol[96] Congress, the General Secretary enumerated the major decisions taken by the party "to further raise living conditions."[97] Adoption of the Food Program at the Central Committee Plenum on May 24 signified the realization of Brezhnev's long-cherished goal toward increased agricultural spending. Accordingly, investment of 233 billion rubles in the agroindustrial complex was to be ensured in the Eleventh Five-Year Plan (1981-1985).[98]

The June declaration of the unilateral commitment not to use nuclear weapons first was later followed by Brezhnev's address to a major conference of the command personnel of the Soviet Army and Navy in which the civilian leadership's policy on military spending was reaffirmed. For the Party leader, since the Armed Forces were already equipped with the most advanced weapons and military hardware, the high command "should always be worthy of this concern."[99]

The contrast between Ustinov and Ogarkov became more visible as Brezhnev's tenure drew to a close. In his 127-page monograph, Ustinov reiterated that military defense was only a means among many available for protecting the

[95] TASS, March 16, 1982 quoted in John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: From Brezhnev to Chernenko*, p. 116.
[96] Komsomol refers to the All-Union Lenin Communist Youth League. An organization administered by the CPSU for youth between ages 14 and 28. Since its establishment in 1918, the Komsomol helped the party prepare new generations for an elite role in Soviet society. It instilled in young people the principles of Marxism-Leninism and involved them in large-scale industrial projects such as factory construction and the virgin land campaign.
[97] John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: From Brezhnev to Chernenko*, p. 153.
[98] *Pravda*, May 27, 1982 quoted in John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: From Brezhnev to Chernenko*, p. 157.
[99] *Pravda*, June 16, 1982 quoted in James McConnell, "Shifts in Soviet Views on the Proper Focus of Military Development", p. 337; F. Stephen Larrabee, "Gorbachev and the Soviet Military", p. 1003 and *Krasnaya zvezda*, October 28, 1982 quoted in Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, p. 196.

country.[100] Conveying a hopeful prognosis for the future of détente, Ustinov echoed a Brezhnevian statement that the Soviet Armed Forces had "all they need to resolve successfully the tasks entrusted to them."[101] The Defense Minister tried extensively to sell the military on the Food Program. He also repeatedly stated that the growth of the armed forces should go hand in hand with the development of "political and economic components of national defense capacity."[102] Claiming it futile "to gamble on military superiority," Ustinov reckoned that the "available armaments" already sufficed to destroy biological life on earth.[103] In a major speech on September 2 in Kuybyshev, he also made numerous references to the general secretary and the accuracy of his assessments.[104]

Ogarkov, on the other hand, sounded more alarming than ever. Insisting on labeling the U.S. menace as aggressive and persistent, the Chief of Staff spoke of the pursuit of a "global offensive on socialism." He believed that mere deterrence was not enough to contain a wide network of military bases organized under the U.S. leadership and called for buttressing the combat potential of the Soviet Armed Forces.[105] From his viewpoint, war had ceased to be a "simple and delicate type of social relationship." Therefore, the resources had to be fully mobilized to counter a surprise attack.[106] In an attempt to obtain a greater share for the military budget, Ogarkov began to lobby for closer economic-military integration, referring to the

[100] D. Ustinov, *Sluzhim Rodina, delu Kommunizma*, (Moscow: Voyenizdat, 1982), pp. 5-8, 22, 50-53, quoted in Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, p. 207.
[101] *Pravda*, May 9, 1982 quoted in John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: From Brezhnev to Chernenko*, p. 154.
[102] *Krasnaya zvezda*, May 29, 1982 quoted in Bruce Parrott, "Political Change and Civil-Military Relations", p. 71.
[103] *Pravda*, July 12, 1982 quoted in Dan L. Strode and Rebecca Strode, "Diplomacy and Defense in Soviet National Security Policy", p. 92; John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: From Brezhnev to Chernenko*, p. 137.
[104] John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: From Brezhnev to Chernenko*, p. 168.
[105] N. Ogarkov, *Vsegda v gotovnosti k zashchite otechestva*, (Moscow: Voenizdat, 1982), pp. 5, 6, 17, 27, 69 quoted in Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, p. 206; *Izvestiia*, May 9, 1982 quoted in John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: From Brezhnev to Chernenko*, pp. 154-155.
[106] *Pravda*, October 2, 1982 quoted in John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: From Brezhnev to Chernenko*, p. 169.

need for "a system of centralized control of the country and the armed forces," but to no avail.[107] He would later try his hand during Andropov's tenure.

[107] N. Ogarkov, *Vsegda v gotovnosti k zashchite otechestva*, (Moscow: Voyenizdat, 1982), p. 60 quoted in Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, p. 197.

# CHAPTER III

# THE ANDROPOV-CHERNENKO INTERREGNUM

# (1982-1984/1984-1985)

## 3.1. The Andropov era (November 1982-February 1984)

### 3.1.1. Andropov enforces discipline

The successor to the office of General Secretary of the CPSU may seem to signify the endurance of gerontocratic inertia. Over 10 years older than Brezhnev was in 1964, Yuri Andropov, just like his predecessor, suffered an ailing health. Nevertheless, his sponsorship of the younger generation in policymaking would inspire the blossoming of 'new thinking' under Mikhail Gorbachev and seal the fate of the USSR.

At a time when the Soviet Union looked for a person with stature and strength to handle the daunting tasks of economic and administrative reforms, Andropov was certainly not dressed for the mission. Totally agnostic about the economy, a field in which he had never worked, Andropov nevertheless rose to prominence given his background as the former head of KGB. His supporters pinned their hopes on the possibility that the new Party leader was well qualified to enforce law, order and discipline. His lengthy administrative, party and diplomatic experience, particularly his effective management of troubled East European affairs further boosted Andropov's credibility.[108]

[108] Robin Edmonds, *Soviet Policy: The Brezhnev Years*, p. 218; Ian Derbyshire, *The Politics of the Soviet Union: From Brezhnev to Gorbachev*, (Cambridge: Chambers, 1987), pp. 35-41. An informative work on Andropov's political background before his assumption of the post of General Secretary and the factors that would shape his policymaking behavior during his tenure see Martin Ebon, *The Andropov File*, (New York: McGraw Hill, 1983).

Early retirement and labor discipline were the two subcategories of Andropov's extensive anti-corruption program that was to become the distinguishing feature of his brief tenure. It was designed to detect and remove inefficient bureaucrats and blackmarketeers that had long been encumbering economic and institutional productivity. Andropov strived to place young and trusted supporters in government and party posts in an attempt to increase the efficiency of these organizations. The initiative appealed in particular to the military who detested the legal privileges of the *nomenklatura*[109] and who were concerned about industrial reorganization and modernization for defense purposes.[110] To the dismay of the high command, however, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs gained leverage in defense making, a tradition to be observed also by Andropov's successors.[111] Frustration on the military's part would mount as the Party leader unveiled his intent to curb defense spending and negotiate with the West.

### 3.1.2. Civilian leadership opts for butter: Brezhnevism resurrected

The new civilian leadership soon proved to be following in the steps of Brezhnev, holding the line in favor of consumer satisfaction and arms control. In his first policy speech at the November 22 Plenum, Andropov's initial inclination appeared to be the fulfillment of the Food Program and the development of working and living conditions. He dealt only perfunctorily with the need to buttress defense

[109] *Nomenklatura* means the CPSU's system of appointing key personnel in the government and other important organizations, based on lists of critical positions and people in political favor. It also refers to the individuals included on these lists.

[110] Ian Derbyshire, *The Politics of the Soviet Union: From Brezhnev to Gorbachev*, pp.102-104; Peter Wiles, "Economic Policies Under Andropov and Chernenko (November 1982-February 1984-March 1985)," in Peter Wiles, ed., *The Soviet Economy on the Brink of Reform*, (Boston: Unwin Hyman Ltd., 1988), pp. 217-236; Seweryn Bialer, *The Soviet Paradox*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), pp. 84-92.

[111] In March 1983, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet appointed the Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko as a first deputy premier endowing him a greater role in the Council of Ministers, see John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: From Brezhnev to Chernenko*, p. 271.

capabilities, stating that the Army and Navy had long been provided with adequate supplies. Though he played to the military galleries by siding with the high command in their harsh assessment of the imperialist threat, he underlined that a world without arms was the ideal of socialism. Articulating his belief in the prospect of détente, Andropov claimed that arms control talks were the means for settling the most complex problems in order to achieve results of benefit to all sides.[112]

In a keynote report on December 21, at celebrations marking the sixtieth anniversary of the USSR, Andropov, once again, denounced the war preparations undertaken by the U.S. and NATO that had reached " an unheard-of-record scale." The General Secretary also spoke of "corresponding weapons systems" that would readily counter the U.S. MX Missile Project (Missile-X)[113] or long-range cruise missiles.[114] Yet, conveying the Soviet efforts to find a common ground between the parties, he declared the readiness to retain in Europe only as many missiles as Britain and France had. This was a major concession aimed to reduce dozens of SS-20s, which were newer and more accurate than the Anglo-French forces and, unlike them, were capable of a first strike.[115]

The Political Declaration released upon the Warsaw Pact summit in Prague in early January 1983 further emphasized the necessity of international cooperation for astute handling of "global problems of a social, economic, demographic and ecological character." The declaration also dwelled upon the urgency to de-ideologize foreign policy and "build relations with capitalist states on the basis of

[112] Yu. Andropov, "Speech at the Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee," November 22, 1982 in Yu. Andropov, *Izbrannie rechi i stat'i*, (Moscow: Politizdat, 1983), pp. 209-218.
[113] An intercontinental ballistic missile system that would be deployed on a circular railroad track so that more than 200 missiles could be moved into 4,600 shelters to be constructed along the track.
[114] John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: From Brezhnev to Chernenko*, p. 220.
[115] Joseph L. Nogee and Robert H. Donaldson, *Soviet Foreign Policy Since World War II*, p. 329.

peaceful coexistence."[116] The same theme was repeated later in a major article in *Kommunist* devoted to the centenary of the death of Marx. Accordingly, Andropov wrote about new concerns faced by the mankind, stressing that preserving peace and avoiding thermonuclear disaster should rank at the top of every nation's priority list.[117]

Nevertheless, President Reagan's pronouncements in March came as a severe blow to the constructive approach adopted by the General Secretary. The U.S. President not only labeled the Soviet Union an 'evil empire', but also announced his Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI, also called the 'Star Wars' program), a space based strategic defense system that was to protect the country from Soviet nuclear attack by intercepting Soviet ICBMs.[118] In reply, Andropov castigated the U.S. for increasing its nuclear arsenal by a factor of 2.5 and for referring to it unashamedly as inactivity, and invited the country to join Moscow in preventing a nuclear catastrophe.[119]

In May, he reiterated the intention to reach agreement on the equality of nuclear potentials in Europe both as regards delivery vehicles and warheads with a due account for the corresponding armaments of Britain and France. At the same time, he continued attacking the U.S. for derailing the successful conclusion of the

[116] TASS, January 6, 1983 quoted in John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: From Brezhnev to Chernenko*, pp. 222-223; Zhores Medvedev, *Andropov*, (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1983), pp. 186, 189-190.
[117] Yu. Andropov, "The Teaching of Karl Marx and Some Questions of Building Socialism in the USSR," February 23, 1983 in Yu. Andropov, *Izbrannie rechi i stat'i*, pp. 189-214.
[118] Susan Sternthal, *Gorbachev's Reforms: De-Stalinization Through Demilitarization*, (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1997), p. 11; Joseph L. Nogee and Robert H. Donaldson, *Soviet Foreign Policy Since World War II*, p. 339.
[119] Yu. Andropov, "Answers to Questions from a *Pravda* Correspondent," March 27, 1983 in Yu. Andropov, *Izbrannie rechi i stat'i*, pp. 250-253.

peace talks and imposing on other nations the American way of life to gain world domination.[120]

### 3.1.3. Civilian-military divergence persists

For his part, Ustinov concurred with Andropov on defense issues. In December 1982 the Defense Minister highlighted the menacing nature of the external threat, yet he lavished praise on the civilian leadership. Underscoring that "the Soviet Union had a clear advantage in practically every category of military power," he conveyed that the Armed Forces were able "effectively and promptly" to counter threats.[121]

In early April 1983, Ustinov referred to Andropov as head of the Politburo.[122] His assumption of the Defense Council chairmanship in May was also publicized for the first time by Ustinov. These promotions would be followed by Andropov's conquest of the presidency at a June 1983 Plenum of the Central Committee.[123]

In the first half of 1983, Ogarkov's statements displayed a tone of moderation and of satisfaction with the status quo. More generous in his gratitude to the civilian leadership, the Chief of Staff contended that the "Armed Forces had everything necessary for the high-quality fulfillment of the tasks set for them."[124] Later on he lined up on the opposite side with Andropov and Ustinov, resurrecting his acrimonious pronouncements on the imperialist threat. His Victory Day article in

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[120] Yu. Andropov, "Speech at a Dinner in the Grand Kremlin Palace in Honor of the Party and State Delegation of the German Democratic Republic Headed by Erich Honecker, General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany and Chairman of the Council of State of the German Democratic Republic," May 3, 1983, in Yu. Andropov, *Izbrannie rechi i stat'i*, pp. 273-276.
[121] TASS, December 6, 1982 quoted in John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: From Brezhnev to Chernenko*, p. 245.
[122] *Krasnaya zvezda*, April 6, 7 and 10, 1983 quoted in John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: From Brezhnev to Chernenko*, p. 272.
[123] Harry Gelman, *The Brezhnev Politburo and the Decline of Détente*, p. 186.
[124] *Krasnaya zvezda*, February 23, 1983 quoted in John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: From Brezhnev to Chernenko*, p. 247.

*Izvestiia* conveyed the Chief of Staff's concerns regarding the U.S. "space strike systems for military purposes and weapons complexes based on new physical principles." Ogarkov also called for the establishment of a high-level command organization in peacetime in light of NATO's capability of launching a surprise attack.[125]

International tension rose to the limit on 1 September 1983 with the shooting down of a South Korean passenger airliner (KAL 007), which had strayed into Russian airspace. The loss of 269 lives including one U.S. Congressman catalyzed the British government to begin deploying American cruise missiles in mid-November. The West German parliament followed, voting on 22 November to accept Pershing-II.[126] Although Ustinov understated the urgency of improving the Soviet defense posture in case a new counterdeployment eventuated after the KAL incident, Ogarkov went to considerable lengths in depicting the external threat as "reminiscent of fascism's actions in the thirties."[127] The final response came on 23 November 1983 when the Soviet delegation walked out of the Geneva arms talks (INF talks) and began deploying more SS-20 and SS-22 missiles in the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia and East Germany.[128]

Yet, Andropov's propensity was one of reiterating commitment to détente. In late-September, the Party leader conveyed his hopes about "broadening and deepening cooperation between states."[129] This was also the time when his health took a sudden turn for worse. As he could not attend the Central Committee Plenum

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[125] *Izvestiia*, May 9, 1983 quoted in John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: From Brezhnev to Chernenko*, pp. 249-251.
[126] Ian Derbyshire, *The Politics in the Soviet Union: From Brezhnev to Gorbachev*, p. 70.
[127] *Krasnaya zvezda*, September 10, 1983 and *Izvestiia*, September 23, 1983 quoted in John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: From Brezhnev to Chernenko*, pp. 297-298.
[128] Ian Derbyshire, *The Politics in the Soviet Union: From Brezhnev to Gorbachev*, p. 71.
[129] Yu. Andropov, "Statement of the General Secretary of the CC of the CPSU, Chairman of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR Yu. V. Andropov," *Krasnaya zvezda*, September 29, 1983 quoted in Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, pp. 210-211.

on December 26, copies of his speech conveying a reaffirmation of ideas and programs on consumer satisfaction were distributed at the session. The need to improve living standards and to "satiate the market with the necessary manufactured goods" appeared as the main theme of his pronouncements. As regards defense spending, it was restated that "everything necessary ha[d] been envisaged to maintain the country's defense capacity at a proper level."[130]

Ogarkov, disappointed with the civilian leadership's inactivity about attending to the military's needs, demanded a more "profound and farsighted assessment of […] military-political events" and enhancement of the Armed Forces' combat readiness.[131] Nevertheless, Andropov's death would not allow this to be realized. His brief secretaryship ended on February 9, 1984 leaving behind a short-lived discipline campaign that failed to cure corruption, absenteeism and suppressed inflation.[132]

### 3.2. The Chernenko era (February 1984-March 1985)

#### 3.2.1. Chernenko upholds the official line

At a time of heightening challenge from the West and major unresolved domestic problems bequeathed from Andropov, the Politburo opted for a new leader who would represent no risks or surprises. Given the partial implementation of Andropov's campaigns, the country was beset by immobilism and uncertainty about the prospect. A malleable Party leader, as it was thought, would not further deteriorate the problematic status quo with unrealistic policy choices. The decision

[130] *Pravda*, December 27, 1983 quoted in John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: From Brezhnev to Chernenko*, pp. 327-328.
[131] *Krasnaya zvezda*, January 11, 1984 quoted in John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: From Brezhnev to Chernenko*, p. 329.
[132] During Andropov's tenure, GNP fell from 3.5% (CIA estimates for 1983) to 1.5% (for 1984). See Philip Hanson, " The Economy" in Martin McCauley, ed., *The Soviet Union Under Gorbachev*, (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), p. 100. Also see Appendix A.

was finally made in favor of Konstantin Chernenko, who was already suffering from emphysema when he took over as general secretary.

Within two months, Chernenko fared well in acquiring the three posts, the General Secretary, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces and the President respectively. During his tenure, Andropov's campaigns to eliminate corruption were dropped. Yet, attempts to ameliorate the ailing economy continued, albeit with little success. Increased visibility of Defense Minister Ustinov and, in particular, the Foreign Minister Gromyko as regards foreign policymaking continued. Complementing this, Ogarkov's ouster finally took place, since his calls for appropriation of more funds to meet military demands had long been considered unbearable.[133]

Chernenko refrained from articulating any direct criticism of the military's performance or of its management of resources. Nevertheless, he implicitly lobbied for a continuation of the investment mix. Put in other words, this involved increased allocations for social programs together with a freeze on military expenditure.[134] The Party leader, though admitting that international pressures and preservation of peace demanded strengthening the country's defense capacity, enunciated that there would be no contemplation of any cutting back on social programs.[135] His tenure also witnessed a return to a more traditional and extensivist approach to the agricultural problem as observed in the 'Long Term Programme for Land Improvement' initiated

[133] Ian Derbyshire, *The Politics in the Soviet Union: From Brezhnev to Gorbachev*, pp. 42-43; Severyn Bialer, *The Soviet Paradox*, pp. 98-105; Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, p. 221.
[134] Coit D. Blacker, *Hostage to Revolution*, p. 148.
[135] *Pravda*, March 3, 1984 quoted in Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, p. 219; TASS, February 13, 1984 quoted in John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: From Brezhnev to Chernenko*, p. 343.

in October 1984. According to this highly expensive project, priority was accorded to expanding both the cultivated and irrigated areas.[136]

### 3.2.2. The Defense Minister-Chernenko congruence

In addressing the imperialist threat, Ustinov's remarks were consonant with those of Chernenko. His Armed Forces Day article in *Pravda* on February 23 conveyed a zealous effort to direct attention to Washington's actions "aimed at establishing world domination and primarily at achieving military superiority over the USSR and the other Warsaw Pact countries."[137] The same viewpoint was echoed by Chernenko, who, in his election speech, charged Americans with creating obstacles to the peace talks through deploying missiles in Europe. For the civilian leadership, the Reagan Administration's "peaceably sounding statements" could be construed as a means to "camouflage the arms race and cold war policy." Slighting the Europeans' share of the onus as regards INF deployments, Chernenko portrayed the adventurist United States as the only responsible party on the issue.[138]

Chernenko's criticism of U.S. arms control policy was later repeated in a banquet speech on May 4. In brief, the General Secretary referred to any hope of "an evolution for the better in the American Administration's policy" as mere illusion.[139] At the same occasion, Ustinov joined Chernenko in denouncing the U.S. INF deployments, which had "wrecked the Geneva talks."[140]

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[136] Ian Derbyshire, *The Politics in the Soviet Union: From Brezhnev to Gorbachev*, p. 95.
[137] *Pravda*, February 23, 1984 quoted in John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: From Brezhnev to Chernenko*, p. 350.
[138] TASS, March 2, 1984 quoted in John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: From Brezhnev to Chernenko*, pp. 350-352.
[139] TASS, May 4, 1984 quoted in John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: From Brezhnev to Chernenko*, p. 363.
[140] Moscow Domestic Service, May 5, 1984 quoted in John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: From Brezhnev to Chernenko*, pp. 363-364.

In late-May, Chernenko was much more accommodating on the high command's needs since he contended that "military might was a more fundamental guarantee of Soviet security than diplomacy." Cautioning against political forces "deaf to the arguments of reason," he praised the deterrent power of Soviet defense potential.[141]

### 3.2.3. Chief of Staff as the military's spokesman

The Chief of Staff went to even greater lengths in rebuking the imperialist countries for being "revanchist neofascist organizations" and demanded the readiness of the Armed Forces to deal an immediate counterstrike against any aggressor to be guaranteed at all instances.[142]

However, neither Chernenko, nor the Ustinov-Gromyko duo was intent to endorse extraordinary measures to buttress the country's defenses. As May drew to a close, Ustinov reiterated this view in a brief remark, which called for working perseveringly to strengthen the country's economy.[143]

To the further disappointment of Ogarkov, "cordial, constructive and professional" meetings between U.S. and Soviet naval officers ensued toward the end of May in Moscow. On July 17, the superpowers signed an agreement on upgrading the Washington-Moscow Hot Line.[144] Ustinov also articulated a milder statement on

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[141] *Krasnaya zvezda*, May 29, 1984 quoted in John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: From Brezhnev to Chernenko*, p. 364.

[142] *Krasnaya zvezda*, May 9, 1984 quoted in Bruce Parrott, "Political Change and Civil-Military Relations", p. 73; Peter Wiles, "Economic Policies Under Andropov and Chernenko (November 1982-February 1984-March 1985)", pp. 243-244.

[143] TASS, May 20, 1984 quoted in John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: From Brezhnev to Chernenko*, p. 373.

[144] *Washington Post*, June 8, 1984 and *Pravda*, July 22, 1984 quoted in John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: From Brezhnev to Chernenko*, p. 386. On June 20, 1963, attempting to reduce the danger that accident, miscalculation or surprise attack might trigger a nuclear war, the U.S. and the Soviet Union agreed in a Memorandum of Understanding to establish a Direct Communications Link known as the 'Hot Line,' for use in time of emergency. Accordingly, each party agreed to ensure prompt delivery to its head of government of any communications received over the Direct Communications Link from the other head of government.

U.S.-Soviet relations expressing his belief that the West would correctly understand and appreciate Soviet intentions.[145] Moreover, Gromyko would later meet President Reagan in Washington on 28 September 1984, and make arrangements for the resumption of Geneva arms control talks to begin in March 1985.[146]

Against this backdrop, change in the high command became a dire necessity. Ogarkov had long proved to be a nuisance in civil-military relations given his vehemence on the development of sophisticated conventional weapons and of high-technology defensive control systems corresponding to the U.S. 'Star Wars' program. Nevertheless, the idea was dismissed as constituting a resource threat to the traditional lower-technology heavy defense industries and to the civilian economy.[147] On May 5, the Chief of Staff was removed on account of "unpartylike" behavior and was replaced by his principal deputy, Marshal Sergei Akhromeyev. At the time of Andropov's tenure, Akhromeyev's promotion from a first deputy chief of the General Staff to the rank of marshal of the Soviet Union had signified an extraordinary case most probably designed to circumscribe Ogarkov's authority. Throughout 1983, Akhromeyev pursued a flexible line on INF concessions compared to Ogarkov. In addition, he was known for his less confrontational public profile.[148]

### 3.2.4. Civilian authority prevails

With Ustinov's death on December 20, 1984, the civilian leadership further solidified its privileged position in defensemaking. The person chosen for the job was a man devoid of any political ambitions or special interest in matters such as arms control. Sergei Sokolov, though a military officer, did not signify the high

[145] *Krasnaya zvezda*, July 21, 1984 quoted in John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: From Brezhnev to Chernenko*, pp. 377-378.
[146] Ian Derbyshire, *The Politics in the Soviet Union: From Brezhnev to Gorbachev*, p. 71.
[147] Ian Derbyshire, *The Politics in the Soviet Union: From Brezhnev to Gorbachev*, p. 42.
[148] Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, pp. 221-223.

command's strengthened hold on security matters. It was rather the reverse, since Sokolov's exclusion from the Politburo suggested a diminution in military vis-à-vis party influence over policy decisions.[149]

As Sokolov had spent the greater part of his career as an administrator, with special expertise in logistics, he was unlikely to bring forth new approaches for handling problems facing the military. Accordingly, it fell to Akhromeyev to voice the military's interests in arms control. He skillfully negotiated with the political leadership over the structure of future agreements and continued to be an influential figure also during Gorbachev's tenure.[150]

In the remainder of his term, Chernenko continued to talk hopefully about peaceful resolution of conflicts, stating that U.S.-Soviet relations should be constructed "on the basis of equality with due account taken of the legitimate interests of each other."[151] He suffered a serious health relapse in mid-January and died on March 10, 1985. Chernenko's was a caretaker regime elected merely not to rock the boat.[152] Therefore, no significant programs were inaugurated under his leadership. The floor was left to Mikhail Gorbachev who would introduce a comprehensive reorientation of defensemaking that would leave a profound impact on civil-military relations.

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[149] Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, p. 223; Ian Derbyshire, *The Politics in the Soviet Union: From Brezhnev to Gorbachev*, p. 43; Jeremy Azrael, *The Soviet Civilian Leadership and the Military High Command: 1976-1986*, p. 199; Bruce Parrott, "Political Change and Civil-Military Relations", p. 74.
[150] Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, pp. 226, 283.
[151] *Pravda*, November 18, 1984 quoted in John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: From Brezhnev to Chernenko*, p. 431.
[152] Compared with the 1984 rate (CIA estimates, 1.5%), Soviet GNP in 1985 remained almost the same (1.6%). See Philip Hanson, "The Economy", p. 100. Also see Appendix A.

# CHAPTER IV

# THE GORBACHEV ERA (1985-1991)

## 4.1. Civilian leadership endeavors reform[153]

Mikhail Gorbachev bequeathed from his heirs a Soviet Union in abysmal condition. Economic stagnation and inefficiency had reached to a nearly irreversible point. Negative trends in labor productivity, supply of goods and in agricultural output, lack of national initiative in technology production as well as poor transportation and communication infrastructure reflected a gloomy picture. Economic growth showed a decline from 7.5 percent under the Eightieth Five-Year Plan (1966-1970) to 2.5 percent under the Eleventh Five-Year Plan (1981-1985).

Against this backdrop, Gorbachev placed a premium on domestic imperatives. In order to revamp national economy, he saw the need to rationalize a reallocation of resources from the defense sector to the consumer sector. Accordingly, he spearheaded a comprehensive reform in Soviet foreign policy. His 'new thinking'[154] was based upon demilitarization of Soviet decisionmaking with due emphasis on interdependence and mutual security. It signified a shift in the Soviet worldview, which stipulated a decrease in international tension to ensure the success of domestic restructuring.

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[153] This section is based upon Coit D. Blacker, *Hostage to Revolution*, pp. 60-66; Joseph L. Nogee and Robert H. Donaldson, *Soviet Foreign Policy Since World War II*, pp. 335-337; Susanne Sternthal, *Gorbachev's Reforms: De-Stalinization Through Demilitarization*, (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 1997), pp. 13-19; Rachel Walker, *Six Years That Shook the World*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), pp. 73-99 and Stephen M. Meyer, "How the Threat (and the Coup) Collapsed", *International Security*, (Winter 1991/1992), pp. 9-10. This chapter gives due attention to remarks by the Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze on account of his close alignment with the civilian leadership and increased powers in defensemaking. Accordingly, documentation of conflicts will also include differences of opinion between the Foreign Minister and the military establishment.

[154] *Perestroika* corresponds to Gorbachev's program of economic, social and political reorientation. 'New thinking' constitutes an integral part of the project.

What was novel and radical in this formulation was that its most important element was repudiation of a core Marxist-Leninist precept[155], namely, the emphasis on international class struggle. The idea of redefining security in economic, not military terms had been articulated by Gorbachev's predecessors. Yet, he remolded this viewpoint in light of a new understanding, which opened the floor for the questioning of Soviet ideological underpinnings and developed them into a cohesive doctrine. His initiative did not refer to a complete renunciation of socialism. Rather, his attempt sought to bring a new quality to the doctrine. Also, unlike other leaders, Gorbachev refrained from labeling the U.S. as the sole culprit in disruption of East-West relations and equally blamed the Soviet Union for its role in impairing cooperation. A last differentiation was his contention that the core threat to Soviet security was not the traditional imperialist attack from the West, but rather an unintended nuclear confrontation that would start through accident or miscalculation. Accordingly, he attached utmost importance to broadening the scope and accelerating the pace of arms control negotiations.

Within this framework, class interests were subordinated to those of humanity; the nature of threat was redefined as economic and utility of political over military means and of mutual security over absolute military advantage was highlighted. 'Reasonable sufficiency' in defense became deeply embedded in policymaking as an oft-articulated watchword. This concept featured quality over quantity regarding weapons and military personnel. It implied increased weight of civilian leadership over the defense agenda and future resource commitments. The

[155] Marxism-Leninism was the ideology of communism developed by Karl Marx and refined and adapted to social and economic conditions in Russia by Lenin. Marx talked of the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat after the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, as a transitional socialist phase before the achievement of communism. Lenin added the idea of a communist party as the vanguard or leading force in promoting the proletarian revolution and building communism. Stalin and subsequent leaders contributed their own interpretations of the ideology. `

effort to expand civilian influence over security policy was also reflected in organizational changes through which the military establishment found its traditional autonomy challenged, this time not only by the highest institutions of decisionmaking (in particular, the Defense Council), but also by other civilian bodies (the Supreme Soviet, the liberal press) engaged in various levels of the process. Specialists drawn from the Academy of Sciences[156] research institutes, prominent among them the Institute for the Study of the U.S.A. and Canada (ISKAN) and the Institute for the Study of the World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO), were also instrumental in the formulation of Soviet national defense policy.

### 4.2. Civilian hold over policymaking: beginning of unilateral concessions

Gorbachev's "peace offensive" began in the spring of 1985 with the motives of repairing relations with the West through a series of arms control agreements and to reap the material benefits of an enhanced dialogue. On April 7, he took the first step towards realization of these goals. Highlighting the necessity to go beyond the détente of the 1970s, the general secretary publicized his intention of an unconditional moratorium on the deployment of intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Europe. This was followed, 10 days later, by a call for a second moratorium on the underground testing of U.S. and Soviet weapons, to begin in August.[157]

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[156] Academy of Sciences was the Soviet Union's most prestigious scholarly institute, which conducted basic research in the physical, natural, mathematical and social sciences. Established in 1725 by Peter the Great, it carried out long-range research and developed new technology. The Academy of Sciences was under the direction of the Council of Ministers.

[157] Mikhail Gorbachev, *Izbrannie rechi i stat'i*, Vol. 2, (Moscow: Politizdat, 1987-88), pp. 134 quoted in Susan Sternthal, *Gorbachev's Reforms: De-Stalinization Through Demilitarization*, p. 43; *Kommunist*, No. 6, (April 1985) quoted in Bruce Parrott, "Soviet National Security Under Gorbachev" in Alexander Dallin and Gail W. Lapidus, eds., *The Soviet System: From Crisis to Collapse*, (Colorado: Westview Press, Inc.), p. 505; Brian A. Davenport, "Civil-Military Relations in the Post-Soviet State: 'Loose Coupling' Uncoupled?" *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. 21, Issue 2, (Winter 1995). Available in EBSCOhost, Academic Search Premier Database.

Gorbachev was sanguine about progress in superpower relations despite his acknowledgement of Western hostility to obtain military superiority. Promising to safeguard Soviet strategic parity he, nevertheless, expressed his firm belief in feasibility of utilizing political means. The Party leader also underlined his observation on the adequacy of the current defense budget, emphasizing instead the primacy of technological and economic development in order to ensure Soviet superpower status.[158] If socioeconomic progress of the country were accomplished, then the nation's defense potential would automatically follow.[159] To maintain his security approach and justify the shifts in Soviet policymaking, Gorbachev also presented a new reading of Soviet history, positing that some of the responsibility for the rise of Hitler belonged to then-adopted Soviet political line.[160]

In accord with these, the General Secretary called for "drastic change in investment and structure policy" during the Central Committee conference on science and technology on June 11-12, 1985. There he unveiled his intent to double investments, particularly in civilian machine building. Though Gorbachev reiterated his complaint about the "immense funds" earmarked for defense, he pledged that, for the time being, spending on social programs and the military would remain intact. However, this policy would be contingent upon meeting target levels in economic progress.[161]

In August 1985, Gorbachev announced a unilateral five-month moratorium on the testing of nuclear weapons, adding that the ban would be extended indefinitely

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[158] *Pravda*, April 24, 1985 and Mikhail Gorbachev, *Izbrannie rechi i stat'i*, p. 147 quoted in Bruce Parrott, "Soviet National Security Under Gorbachev", pp. 505, 507.
[159] Moscow Television Service, May 8, 1985 quoted in John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: Gorbachev, 1985-1989*, (Boston: Unwin Hyman Ltd., 1991), p. 31.
[160] *Kommunist*, No. 8, (May 1985) quoted in Bruce Parrott, "Soviet National Security Under Gorbachev", p. 505. Here Gorbachev was referring to Stalin's disastrous orders for the German Communists to concentrate their political attacks on the German Social Democrats rather than Nazis.
[161] Moscow Domestic Television Service, June 11, 1985 and June 26, 1985 quoted in John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: Gorbachev, 1985-1989*, p. 25.

if the U.S. agreed to take part. This conciliatory gesture was the first of several others to follow, designed to boost the credibility of Gorbachev in the eyes of the West regarding the sincerity of his reform pledges. Yet, it failed to arouse much reaction on the adversary's side. The U.S. continuously declined the disavowal of the SDI programme. Nevertheless, the two parties agreed on meeting on November 19-20 to resume negotiations.[162]

For propaganda purposes, Gorbachev designed a high profile visit to Paris to take place on October 2-5. In an interview before his departure to Paris, Gorbachev remarked that ideological differences did not constitute an obstacle to cooperate on issues of war and peace, demonstrating the willingness that he attached to peaceful settlement of disputes.[163]

In Paris, the General Secretary launched the notion of 'reasonable sufficiency' – a concept that would prove to be a watershed in Soviet-American relations. Underlining the impossibility to build a lasting peace on deterrence, Gorbachev proposed to reduce strategic offensive forces by 50 percent and to delink the INF and SDI. By agreeing to conclude an accord limiting intermediate-range nuclear missiles without having solved the problem of space and strategic arms, the Party leader went counter to the official Soviet position. Gorbachev also announced a reduction in SS-20 deployments and complete withdrawal of "the old, and very powerful" SS-5 missiles.[164] Back in Moscow, in his speech to the October Plenum

[162] Coit D. Blacker, *Hostage to Revolution*, p. 97.
[163] Moscow Television Service, October 1, 1985 quoted in John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: Gorbachev, 1985-1989*, p. 59.
[164] Moscow Domestic Service, October 3, 1985 quoted in John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: Gorbachev, 1985-1989*, p. 60; "Mikhail Gorbachev, General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, Addresses the French National Assembly and Senate", *Survival*, (March/April 1986), pp. 163-164 quoted in Coit D. Blacker, *Hostage to Revolution*, p. 98.

before the Central Committee, the Party leader reiterated a strong belief in the benefits of an "active political dialogue" vis-à-vis projection of military force.[165]

The Geneva summit in November fell short of Soviet expectations, failing to achieve a substantive conclusion with respect to arms control. According to the U.S., the SDI project was far from carrying deterrent qualities. Rather, it plainly served defensive purposes. In a spirited reply, Gorbachev impugned against the idea, confirming that, without a discontinuation of SDI, there could be no offensive cuts in START.[166]

### 4.3. The military leadership expresses concern in vain

Against this backdrop, Defense Minister Sokolov demonstrated a notable disquietude. Portraying a grim picture of U.S. militarism, he demanded that the Soviet Armed Forces be upgraded to guarantee the country's defense might. Drawing attention to the "severe lessons" of World War II, he called for increased vigilance.[167] In his viewpoint, the American 'Star Wars' plan was designed as part of a first-strike strategy aimed at inflicting upon the Soviet Union irreparable harm.[168] When, in July 1985, Foreign Minister Gromyko was replaced with Eduard A. Shevardnadze -a close ally of Gorbachev and a full member of the Politburo whereas Sokolov was only a candidate member- Sokolov, for a brief interval, sought to concur with the civilian leadership. Gorbachev's assuming the chairmanship of the Defense Council on August 1 was another source of brake on Sokolov's stinging

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[165] *Pravda*, October 17, 1985 quoted in John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: Gorbachev, 1985-1989*, p. 63 and Susan Sternthal, *Gorbachev's Reforms: De-Stalinization Through Demilitarization*, pp. 46-47.
[166] Coit D. Blacker, *Hostage to Revolution*, pp. 99-100.
[167] *Kommunist*, No. 6, (1985) quoted in Bruce Parrott, "Political Change and Civil-Military Relations", p. 78.
[168] *Krasnaya zvezda*, May 5, 1985 quoted in Raymond L. Garthoff, "The Future of Strategic Arms Limitation" in Derek Leebaert and Timothy Dickinson eds., *Soviet Strategy and New Military Thinking*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 65.

criticisms. In a *Pravda* speech, he conveyed that "the armed forces had all they need to defend the country." In his address at the November 7 parade, he placed the satisfaction of consumer needs in first place. Nevertheless, he could not remain indifferent for long. As discussions on the Twelfth Five-Year Plan (1986-1990) came to a close, the Defense Minister reappeared on the scene, warning the political leadership against the aggressive designs of the West.[169]

For his part, the Chief of Staff Akhromeyev was less anxious on the issue of national security. Contrary to Sokolov, he stressed the need to adopt a "broad and realistic approach" and to take into consideration the economic possibilities of the country on questions of defense-readiness. He had long before realized that it was imperative to decrease tensions in East-West relations for enhanced security and economic healing. Akhromeyev's championship of a flexible approach placed him among Gorbachev's front advisors and most of the time he proved to be a skillful mediator between the civilian leadership and military establishment.[170]

### 4.4. Organizational changes add to concessions

Gorbachev's ventures continued well into 1986. In January, the General Secretary announced a three-stage total nuclear disarmament program by the year 2000. In parenthesis, he called for the reduction of conventional weapons to levels that would obstruct their use in offensive operations. These proclamations aimed at

[169] *Pravda*, November 8, 1985 quoted in Bruce Parrott, "Political Change and Civil-Military Relations", p. 79; "A Speech by Comrade S. I. Sokolov", *Pravda*, November 8, 1985 quoted in Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, p. 247; *Krasnaya zvezda*, December 31, 1985 quoted in Bruce Parrott, "Political Change and Civil-Military Relations", p. 79.
[170] Susan Sternthal, *Gorbachev's Reforms: De-Stalinization Through Demilitarization*, pp. 42, 44-45; Bruce Parrott, "Political Change and Civil-Military Relations", pp. 78-79.

influencing the Western public opinion in a way that would score points for the Soviet side in the forthcoming superpower negotiations.[171]

The 27th Party Congress in February-March 1986 witnessed Gorbachev's statements upon "radical reform." Underscoring the necessity to establish "a new economic mechanism" the Party leader advocated economic stimulation and financial autonomy. In order to accomplish these tasks, he conveyed his faith in the attainability of Soviet-American cooperation. Gorbachev rejected the employment of military-technical means for the purpose of ensuring security. Yet, at the same time, he gave public assurances that the Soviet Union would not engage in unilateral disarmament. These formulations were not new, however, and the Congress became the platform in which the Soviet leader stated his views explicitly and in detail. Parroting the traditional remarks on the Party's "unremitting attention to the country's defense capability," he claimed that the armed forces already enjoyed "modern weaponry and technology at their disposal."[172] More annoying to the military was the decision adopted in the new program, which endowed the CPSU with the prerogative "to strengthen its organizing and directing influence on the life and activities of the Armed Forces."[173]

The explosion of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in Ukraine on April 26, 1986 had several implications for the civilian and military leadership alike. Infamous for being the worst nuclear accident in history known so far, the Chernobyl incident displayed that the dangers of nuclear conflagration could be a truly concrete phenomenon. Through this experience, the military establishment's solid stance on

[171] *Pravda*, January 16, 1986 quoted in John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: Gorbachev, 1985-1989*, p. 70.
[172] Moscow Television Service, February 25, 1986 quoted in John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: Gorbachev, 1985-1989*, pp. 81-84; *Izvestiia*, February 26, 1986 quoted in Bruce Parrott, "Soviet National Security Under Gorbachev", p. 509*; Materialy XXVII s''ezda KPSS*, (Moscow: Politizdat, 1986), p. 22 quoted in Stephen White, "Rethinking the CPSU", *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 3, (1991), p. 407.
[173] F. Stephen Larrabee, "Gorbachev and the Soviet Military", p. 1007.

the winnability of a nuclear war was truly challenged.[174] This realization also catalyzed various organizational changes so as to establish a firm civilian hold on defense issues. The most notable was the creation of an Arms Control and Disarmament Directorate in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in June 1986. A similar establishment followed in July, as a special arms control sector in the International Department (ID). To that date, national security matters had not fallen under the jurisdiction of ID. Questions pertaining to weapons development, force posture and military strategy was, up until the mid-1980s, under the sphere of the General Staff and the Ministry of Defence. Yet, with the advent of novel changes, both the ID and the MFA were authorized to encroach upon the military arena. Gorbachev's aim was not to displace the military as a source of expertise and advice on defense issues. Rather, he sought an alternative source (liberal civilian analysts) for inspiration required for his radical restructuring programme.[175] The Main Political Administration became the main channel to embed 'new thinking' in the Armed Forces.[176]

Gorbachev outlined a major new arms reduction proposal at the Central Committee Plenum on June 16. The initiative agreed to the continuance of SDI research yet, to be confined to the laboratory level only. It set forth a new INF compromise deal, which ignored British and French missile forces, but called for

[174] Susan Sternthal, *Gorbachev's Reforms: De-Stalinization Through Demilitarization*, p. 65.
[175] Mark Kramer, "The Role of the CPSU International Department in Soviet Foreign Relations and National Security Policy", *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 3, (July 1990), pp. 429-446; Alex Pravda, "The Politics of Foreign and Security Policy" in Stephen White, Alex Pravda and Zvi Gitelman, eds., *Developments in Soviet Politics*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1990), pp. 216-220. The International Department of the CPSU Central Committee was founded in 1943. Between 1948 and 1955 it underwent several name changes, but for the sake of simplicity it will be referred here as the 'International Department' (ID). Before the organizational changes, the department's main responsibilities were limited to sponsoring international front organizations, coordinating relations with non-ruling Communist parties and other radical groups, and supporting revolutionary movements in the Third World.
[176] Christoph Bluth, *The Collapse of Military Power*, (Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishing Company Ltd., 1995), pp. 34-35.

America to continue to abide by the 1972 ABM Treaty for at least for another 15 years.[177] Akhromeyev, at the service of the civilian leadership to discourage opposition in the military, had his reservations on two areas. He was equally sensitive about unilateral gestures on the part of the Soviet Union and about the verification procedures, which could "turn into intelligence activity." Although he was accommodating on arms control issues, the Chief of Staff confessed that the Soviet Union had to inflict considerable harm upon itself by making unilateral concessions. Nevertheless, he contended that the scope of this was not altogether intolerable.[178]

Another conciliatory proposal came two months later involving a loosening of Soviet restrictions on verification measures. These efforts by the civilian leadership fared well, eventuating in the signing of a Warsaw Pact-NATO conventional force "confidence building treaty", which was signed in Stockholm in September 1986. It was during the same occasion that an accord on on-site inspections (a point the Soviet military had incessantly resisted) was signed and an agreement was made to hold a summit in Reykjavik on 11-12 October.[179]

Much to the annoyance of the civilian leadership, the Reykjavik summit failed to produce a positive outcome. On the contrary, it contributed to a cooling in Soviet-American relations. The Soviet proposal included a cross-board 50 percent cut in strategic missile forces and the elimination of all superpower intermediate-range forces in Europe within five years. The latter meant Soviet acquiescence of the

[177] TASS, June 6, 1986 quoted in John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: Gorbachev, 1985-1989*, p. 109; Coit D. Blacker, *Hostage to Revolution*, pp. 104-105.
[178] *Pravda*, January 19, 1986 and Gary Lee, "Soviets Successfully Use Nuclear Test Ban for International Campaign", *Washington Post*, August 31, 1986 quoted in Dale R. Herspring, *The Soviet High Command: 1967-1989*, pp. 253-254.
[179] Ian Derbyshire, *The Politics in the Soviet Union*, p. 75.

'zero option' that Reagan had proposed during INF negotiations in November 1981. However, it was rejected, upon the U.S. refusal to bargain on SDI.[180]

### 4.5. Re-bringing the military under control

In early 1987 the military began to show signs of coming in line with the civilian leadership. In an article that he wrote for *Le Monde*, Defense Minister Sokolov touched upon the destructive capabilities of weapons obstructing their utilization. Later, he named "war prevention" as the motto of Soviet military doctrine.[181] Gorbachev would reiterate a similar theme in September, in concert with Akhromeyev. According to the General Secretary and the Chief of Staff, for a conventional war to turn into a nuclear war was no longer a remote possibility.[182]

Gorbachev's announcement in late February of a willingness to reduce intermediate-range nuclear forces without waiting for a breakthrough in START, and his agreeing to a concession in April regarding the SS-23 missile without having consulted the high command, caused indignation among the military while heralding increased room for the civilian leadership to maneuver.[183] Akhromeyev was highly irritated at the Gorbachev-Shevardnadze duo who had disregarded the opinion of the military on such a sensitive issue. Yet, in early May, Akhromeyev again rallied to the flag, stating that "nuclear war [could] only lead to mankind's destruction."[184]

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[180] Ian Derbyshire, *The Politics in the Soviet Union*, p. 75; Coit D. Blacker, *Hostage to Revolution*, pp. 105-107; Susan Sternthal, *Gorbachev's Reforms: De-Stalinization Through Demilitarization*, pp. 76-78 and John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: Gorbachev, 1985-1989*, pp. 138-147.
[181] *Krasnaya zvezda*, January 23, 1987 and *Pravda*, February 23, 1987 quoted in John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: Gorbachev, 1985-1989*, p. 171.
[182] Moscow Television Service, September 29, 1987 quoted in John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: Gorbachev, 1985-1989*, pp. 173-174.
[183] Coit D. Blacker, *Hostage to Revolution*, p. 109; Mikhail Gorbachev, *Zhizn i reformy* (Moscow: Novosti, 1995), Vol. 2, pp. 36-40 quoted in Susan Sternthal, *Gorbachev's Reforms: De-Stalinization Through Demilitarization*, p. 85.
[184] *Krasnaya zvezda*, May 9, 1986 quoted in John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: Gorbachev, 1985-1989*, p. 173.

Again in February, Gorbachev raised his tone about defense spending that had become "a load on the economy" for it diverted "enormous resources that could be directed elsewhere."[185] He, moreover, cautioned against falling into Western traps, which sought to push the Soviet Union into military competition and, by this means, to drain the country's economic might and slow its progress.[186]

On May 28, the undetected landing at the gates of Kremlin of a small Cessna aircraft belonging to a nineteen-year old West German youngster left Gorbachev with surprise and disappointment. Chastising the military as the only culprit for the incident, he, almost immediately, used it as a pretext to announce the removal of the Defense Minister Sokolov who had long proved to be a nuisance. He was replaced by General Dmitrii Yazov, a long time supporter of Gorbachev's reforms.[187] His stance on arms control issues was exemplified in a *Krasnaya zvezda* article, conveying the new Defense Minister's endorsement of the official line, namely "avoidance of war." For him, the armed forces should devote due attention to "confidence building measures designed to prevent inadvertent war."[188] Nevertheless, Gorbachev reckoned it best not to promote Yazov to full membership of the Politburo despite the latter's being an efficient commander and a devout advocate of the 'new thinking.'[189]

Gorbachev enjoyed bypassing military prerogatives in policymaking, and continued to move arbitrarily. In September, he allowed a U.S. congressional delegation to make inspections on the controversial Soviet Krasnoyarsk radar site –

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[185] "Gorbachev's Modernization Programme: A Status Report", U.S. Central Intelligence Agency and Defense Intelligence Agency, March 19, 1987, p. 15 quoted in Russell Bova, "The Soviet Military and Economic Reform", *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 2, (July 1988), p. 388.
[186] *Pravda*, February 28, 1987 quoted in Bruce Parrott, "Soviet National Security Under Gorbachev", p. 515.
[187] F. Stephen Larrabee, "Gorbachev and the Soviet Military", p. 1008.
[188] *Krasnaya zvezda*, July 29, 1987 quoted in Bruce Parrott, "Soviet National Security Under Gorbachev", p. 522.
[189] F. Stephen Larrabee, "Gorbachev and the Soviet Military", p. 1007.

which the U.S. regarded as violating the ABM Treaty. One month later, he let the Western experts view the chemical weapons factory at Shikhany.[190] In November, the General Secretary pointed out such countries as Japan, West Germany, Italy and the United States to stand as role models for the Soviet Union to emulate. Underlining that these countries had prospered on account of their adapting to the "new economic order," Gorbachev implied that, in order to reinvigorate Soviet economy, disarmament should be realized.[191]

The climax came with the signing of INF Treaty on December 8, which stipulated unequal reductions on the Soviet side. According to its provisions, all intermediate and shorter-range missiles and GLCMs with a range of between 300 and 3,500 miles were to be totally eliminated. In line with these, the Soviets agreed to dismantle and destroy about 1,836 intermediate missiles, as well as 850 missile launchers. Nevertheless, the U.S. were to relinquish fewer than half as many missiles and only a third as many launchers. In short, the Soviets were bound to destroy almost three missiles for every single U.S. weapon. In addition to the 'national technical means', a comprehensive verification regime to buttress on-site as well as challenge inspections was adopted.[192] This had long been a growing U.S. concern since satellites could only detect stationary missiles with single warheads.[193]

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[190] Susan Sternthal, *Gorbachev's Reforms: De-Stalinization Through Demilitarization*, p. 90.
[191] Mikhail Gorbachev, *Oktyabr i perestroika*, (Moscow: Izdatelstvo politicheskoi literatury, 1987), pp. 109-110, 117, 120 quoted in Susan Sternthal, *Gorbachev's Reforms: De-Stalinization Through Demilitarization*, pp. 92-93.
[192] Coit D. Blacker, *Hostage to Revolution*, pp. 112-114; Richard F. Staar, *Foreign Policies of the Soviet Union*, pp. 299-300; Alvin Z. Rubinstein, *Soviet Foreign Policy Since World War II: Imperial and Global*, p. 245.
[193] Margot Light, "Foreign Policy" in Martin McCauley, ed., *Gorbachev and Perestroika*, (Houndmills: MacMillan Press, Inc., 1990), p. 181.

### 4.6. The Chief of Staff resigns upon concessions and changes

In time, the military leadership seemed to adopt the line framed by the civilian authority. Proving to be worthy of Gorbachev's trust, and following in Akhromeyev's steps, Defense Minister Yazov, in his Order of the Day for Armed Forces Day in February 1988 refrained from touching upon "strengthening" or "maintenance" of Soviet defence capacity. On commenting upon conventional war, he conveyed the destructive nature of "modern chemical enterprises and power facilities" that would lead to catastrophic consequences.[194]

In late May, Gorbachev took the giant step toward installing civilian rule over policymaking. Before the opening of the 19th Party Conference[195] on June 28, he prepared and circulated a document of ten 'theses' involving his plans for a reshuffling of legislative structure and directives regarding foreign policy. The 'theses' criticized the *nomenklatura* as an outdated and inefficient tradition, calling for a separation of Party functions from those of the government through democratization and rule of law in order to break with the over-centralization of decisionmaking. The 'theses' also called for "full restoration of the role and powers" of soviets[196] of people's deputies. Eventually, the Conference reorganized the Party apparatus by creating the Congress of People's Deputies (CPD) as a governing body. A two-tier parliamentary structure was established in which the CPD was accepted as the most powerful body of government, among the members of which the deputies to the Supreme Soviet would be elected. Through this rearrangement, Gorbachev, as head of state and the general secretary, gained the right to function more

[194] *Pravda*, February 23, 1988 quoted in John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: Gorbachev, 1985-1989*, p. 282

[195] Similar in size to the congress was the party conference, although unlike the congress it did not meet regularly. Officially, the conference ranked third in importance among party meetings, after the congress and the Central Committee plenum.

[196] A 'soviet' was an elected governmental council in the Soviet Union.

independently from the Party apparat. These novel structures would be approved in November by the necessary constitutional changes approved by the Supreme Soviet.[197]

Foreign Minister Shevardnadze readily welcomed these proceedings. Claiming the right of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to oversee security policy, he advocated the urgency to subject the military to "democratic control" by "supreme national bodies." From his viewpoint, such an initiative would prevent "severe economic side-effects" alluding to costly demands by the military for upgrading of the armed forces.[198] In addition, Shevardnadze demanded increased privilege for the Ministry to check whether new military policies and weapons systems were in congruence with Soviet treaty obligations and political declarations.[199]

Under dual attack by Gorbachev and Shevardnadze, Akhromeyev delivered concern upon the military's status in foreign policymaking. Stressing that it was the duty of the General Staff to initiate 'new thinking' in the army and navy, he conveyed the uneasiness regarding encroachment over military's traditional privileges. Both Yazov and Akhromeyev made intense efforts regarding the implementation of 'new thinking' inside the armed forces, even chastising

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[197] Susan Sternthal, *Gorbachev's Reforms: De-Stalinization Through Demilitarization*, pp. 110-113. Broad legislative powers previously held by the Central Committee shifted to the new Congress of People's Deputies and the parliament (Supreme Soviet) following the December 1988 amendments to the Soviet Constitution. The new CPD brought together representatives of a much broader spectrum of constituencies than the Central Committee. Similarly, whereas the former Supreme Soviet was largely a rubber-stamp body, the newly elected Supreme Soviet rapidly became a meaningful parliament. It involved two permanent joint committees with primary responsibility for international relations. The Joint Committee for Defense and State Security supervised government policy on the armed forces, defense industries and the security police. The Joint Committee for International Affairs monitored Soviet foreign policy generally. It also confirmed all of Gorbachev's ambassadorial and high-level appointments within the MFA. See Appendix B for extensive information on the new parliamentary structure.

[198] Eduard Shevardnadze, "The 19th All-Union CPSU Party Conference: Foreign Policy and Diplomacy", *International Affairs* (Moscow), 10, (October 1988), p. 3 quoted in Susan Sternthal, *Gorbachev's Reforms: De-Stalinization Through Demilitarization*, p. 117.

[199] *Vestnik Ministerstva Inostrannykh Del SSSR*, No. 15, (1988), pp. 29-36 quoted in Bruce Parrott, "Soviet National Security Under Gorbachev", p. 527; *Pravda*, July 26, 1988 quoted in John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: Gorbachev, 1985-1989*, p. 286.

commanders and staffs at times, for their slowness and timidity in "grasp[ing] the demands of the defensive strategy and operational art."[200] Akhromeyev also highlighted the necessity for reliable defense-preparedness in light of the continuing imperialist threat. Next, he added that the military establishment was devoting required attention to security issues so as not to necessitate another organ to supervise its dealings.[201]

The fall of 1988 was stage to another heated debate on conventional arms, a matter which the high command found it hard to concur with its counterpart. In his article in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, Yazov broke his silence and articulated openly his distress about asymmetrical reductions on the side of the Soviet Union. Finding unilateral elimination of weapons as untenable, he called for "reciprocity in the military sphere."[202] Nevertheless, efforts to influence the civilian leadership backfired when Gorbachev fortified his personal status at the Central Committee Plenum on September 30 over Gromyko's retirement from the post of chairmanship of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet (which he had assumed after his resignation as foreign minister). On October 1, the Supreme Soviet accepted Gromyko's resignation and unanimously endorsed Gorbachev as the new Chairman (namely, the President). By this means, much to the disappointment of the military, the General Secretary gained more leverage over economic, social and foreign policy.[203]

At the November 3 Politburo meeting, Gorbachev repeated his criticisms of the military, conveying that attainment of military objectives should not be accomplished at the expense of the population. Pointing out that the Soviet Union

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[200] *Krasnaya zvezda*, August 13, 1988 quoted in Coit D. Blacker, *Hostage to Revolution*, p. 157.
[201] *Krasnaya zvezda*, August 13, 1988 quoted in Susan Sternthal, *Gorbachev's Reforms: De-Stalinization Through Demilitarization*, pp. 118-119.
[202] Susan Sternthal, *Gorbachev's Reforms: De-Stalinization Through Demilitarization*, p. 120.
[203] John W. Parker, *Kremlin in Transition: Gorbachev, 1985-1989*, pp. 313-314.

was spending two and a half times more than the U.S. on defense needs, he underlined a fact that the former had got almost nothing in return by investing on arms.[204] A landmark incident ensued the same month, conveying acceptance by the Chief of Staff, albeit unwillingly, of deeper cuts in military expenditure. Akhromeyev, under double-fire by political pressure and a deteriorating Soviet economy particularly beset by successive crises after the 19th Party Conference, dropped his reservations and acknowledged the necessity for unilateral reductions.[205] However, his yielding to the civilian authority would not last long.

In his speech to the United Nations General Assembly in December 1988, Gorbachev publicized a dramatic concession on the issue of conventional arms. Accordingly, he promised unilaterally to withdraw 50,000 Soviet troops and 5,000 Soviet tanks from Hungary, Czechoslovakia and East Germany, to reduce the Soviet Armed Forces by 500,000 men by 1990, to withdraw from Eastern Europe all offensive equipment, to cut Soviet forces in the Atlantic-to-Urals area by 10,000 tanks, 8,500 artillery systems and 800 combat aircraft and to reorganize Soviet forces in Europe along defensive lines.[206] Moreover, Gorbachev heralded a new transformation that began to re-characterize relations between the Soviet Union and its socialist allies. Renouncing interference in affairs of the allies, the Soviet leader declared that "freedom of choice" would mark the new era.[207]

It was after these pronouncements that Akhromeyev resigned. Speculations prevail over whether it was because of his traditional uncompromising stance on unilateral concessions that paved the way for his resignation. Yet, the fact that he

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[204] Susan Sternthal, *Gorbachev's Reforms: De-Stalinization Through Demilitarization*, p. 127.
[205] S. F. Akhromeyev and G. M. Kornienko, *Glazami Marshala i Diplomata*, (Moscow: Mezhdunarodnye otnosheniya, 1992), pp. 211-212 quoted in Susan Sternthal, *Gorbachev's Reforms: De-Stalinization Through Demilitarization*, p. 125.
[206] William E. Odom, "The Soviet Military in Transition" in Frederic J. Fleron, Jr., Erik P. Hoffmann and Robbin F. Laird, eds., *Contemporary Issues in Soviet Foreign Policy: From Brezhnev to Gorbachev*, p. 654.
[207] Susan Sternthal, *Gorbachev's Reforms: De-Stalinization Through Demilitarization*, p. 127.

assumed a new position as Gorbachev's personal military advisor as well as to the Defense Council seems to cast a shadow on this probability.[208]

### 4.7. The new Chief of Staff fights the army's corner

Akhromeyev's successor was Col. General Mikhail Moiseyev, a young military officer with an interest in personnel issues as well as science and technology. Having little background in arms control or doctrinal matters, Moiseyev's ascension to the post signified Gorbachev's latent intention to continue enjoying his monopoly over defense issues.[209] In the December 27 Politburo meeting, Gorbachev complained that for many military officers, the army was no more than a "feeding trough." In his eyes, Moiseyev seemed to be the right choice that would handle aptly the daunting task of personnel orientation.[210] By this means, he could continue headlong on arms control.

In January 1989, the Soviet leader addressed a delegation in Moscow from the Trilateral Commission[211] announcing a 19.5 percent cut in military hardware procurement and a 14.3 percent cut in the total military budget, effective by 1991. He also called for enhanced economic cooperation between the capitalist and socialist countries, without taking into consideration ideological differences.[212]

To the dismay of Gorbachev, Moiseyev sided with the military leadership. In his first major speech on February 10, the Chief of Staff warned against "the aggressive orientation of imperialist policy" that had endured, underlining that it was the duty of the Soviet Armed Forces to be in utmost readiness to counter a potential

[208] William E. Odom, "The Soviet Military in Transition", p. 521.
[209] *New York Times*, December 16, 1988 quoted in Coit D. Blacker, *Hostage to Revolution*, pp. 276-277; John Erickson, "Army: Military Perestroika or Military Reform" in D. W. Spring, ed., *The Impact of Gorbachev*, (London: Pinter Publishers, Ltd., 1991), pp. 117-118.
[210] *Krasnaya zvezda*, December 28, 1988 quoted in Susan Sternthal, *Gorbachev's Reforms: De-Stalinization Through Demilitarization*, p. 130.
[211] An international think-tank that includes renowned Western political and business leaders.
[212] Susan Sternthal, *Gorbachev's Reforms: De-Stalinization Through Demilitarization*, p. 131.

attack. Basing his claims on Marxist-Leninist grounds, Moiseyev sought increased vigilance and "to answer force with force." From his viewpoint, civilian hold over defense questions should be relegated to secondary status, since it fell to military professionals to determine what was at stake for the country.[213]

The first elections to the Congress of People's Deputies were held on March 26. Among the many groups that gained the right to represent themselves in this newly established body was the military, yet only to occupy 79 seats (3.6 percent of the Congress). The elections were the promise of an unbiased platform where every party would defend its rights and articulate grievances. However, inclusion of young reform-minded military officers to the Congress heralded a conflict of interests vis-à-vis conservative senior officers. As the military divided into two factions, Gorbachev and Shevardnadze enjoyed the thought of gaining more breathing space for prospective negotiations with the West.[214]

During the summer, Moiseyev took a more jaundiced view of U.S. intentions. In June, the Chief of Staff tried to defend the Soviet military budget indicating that the U.S. budget on defense far surpassed that of the Soviet Union. In July, he repeated his claim with regard to who should advise on military issues, stressing for one more time that it fell to the domain of the military only. Rebuking the so-called "military theorists," -namely, the civilian analysts- Moiseyev alleged that their knowledge of the "life of the Armed Forces [was] at best derived from a few cinema films and a few books."[215] Yazov also demonstrated his discontent over Shevardnadze's meeting with the U.S. Secretary of State James A. Baker in

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[213] *Krasnaya zvezda*, February 10, 1989 quoted in Susan Sternthal, *Gorbachev's Reforms: De-Stalinization Through Demilitarization*, pp. 139-140.
[214] Susan Sternthal, *Gorbachev's Reforms: De-Stalinization Through Demilitarization*, pp. 138, 143.
[215] *Pravda*, June 11, 1989 and *Kommunist vooruzhennykh sil*, No. 13, (July 1989) quoted in Robert L. Arnett, "Soviet Debate Over National Security Policy: Implications For the Military" in Roy Allison, *Radical Reform in Soviet Defense Policy*, (Houndmills: MacMillan Press, Inc., 1992), pp. 13, 15.

September, during which the former had proposed to "disband both military alliances" and to delink START from SDI. To the further disappointment of the military, this meeting had been held without the high command's knowledge. Behind this repeated *fait accompli* (the first was about concessions on SS-23) was the reason that, the Foreign Minister knew exactly about the military stance pertaining to cuts in strategic weapons. Accordingly, the military would never consent to any reduction in such weapons since the resolution of this issue was conditional upon each side's refusal to establish and develop a substantive anti-missile defense system. Moreover, the high command was still regretful about the delinking of INF and SDI.[216]

Moiseyev did not refrain from directing his attacks at the Central Committee Plenum convened in early February 1990. This meeting marked a watershed in Soviet history since it signified the completion of the party's renunciation of earlier monopoly and the creation of the new post of 'presidency' and a non-party 'Presidential Council.'[217] The person to the new post was to be elected by universal suffrage, but Gorbachev's election was an exception.[218] Moiseyev was enraged on two grounds. Firstly, he was upset about the draft platform prepared and approved during the Plenum for the upcoming 28th Party Congress in July. In his view, the political leadership placed too much emphasis on curtailing the defense budget to the levels that would endanger Soviet military potential. Fearing lest this might deprive

[216] *Izvestiia*, September 16, 1989 quoted in Susan Sternthal, *Gorbachev's Reforms: De-Stalinization Through Demilitarization*, p. 159.
[217] In December 1990, the whole constitutional arrangement would undergo a further shift: The Council of Ministers was abolished and was replaced by a smaller Cabinet of Ministers, headed by a Prime Minister. The Presidential Council, the primary institution advising Gorbachev on foreign policy matters was replaced with a new Security Council. The new establishment was charged with briefing the President on questions of defense and security. Another advisory body was the Federation Council, directed to counsel on domestic political matters and interethnic disputes. See Appendix B.
[218] John Gooding, "The XXVIII Congress in Perspective", *Soviet Studies*, Vol. 43, No. 2, (1991), pp. 240-242. On grounds of necessity, Gorbachev's assuming the post was made by vote of Congress alone.

the country of its combat capabilities and create an imbalance in strategic parity, the Chief of Staff demanded more concern on this touchy issue.[219]

Next, he protested the new law on presidency, arguing that it was flawed on account of "serious defense-related omissions" in its formulation.[220] To elaborate, the Chief of Staff pointed to the obscurity regarding the powers of the President and feared in case he attempted to abuse his "right personally to make the decision and issue authority to use nuclear weapons as a retaliatory measure." Moiseyev's apprehension was indicative of the high command's absence during the law's preparation. Another source of nuisance was the lack of clarification regarding the status of Defense Council in this new framework. Moiseyev averred that the role of the Defense Council in military matters should not be subsumed under the Supreme Soviet's Committee for Defense and Security as well as the Presidential Council, since especially the latter included persons with insufficient background or authority on defense issues.[221]

Meanwhile, the civilian leadership launched a counterattack. In April, Gorbachev stated firmly that it was imperative to "disarm and move to a peaceful track." He argued that the Soviet Union took the lead among the states regarding defense spending since 18-20 percent of Soviet national revenue was earmarked for military purposes. Shevardnadze followed in, contending that, insistence on

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[219] *Krasnaya zvezda*, February 10, 1989 quoted in Susan Sternthal, *Gorbachev's Reforms: De-Stalinization Through Demilitarization*, p. 177.

[220] *Krasnaya zvezda*, March 16, 1990 quoted in Robert L. Arnett, "Soviet Debate Over National Security Policy: Implications For the Military", p. 14.

[221] *Krasnaya zvezda*, March 16, 1990 quoted in William E. Odom, "The Soviet Military in Transition", p. 533. The March 1990 changes empowered the President to ban disturbances of the public order, including strikes, demonstrations, publications, movements and organizations that pursue "militant and unconstitutional goals." The President could also impose temporary presidential rule over particular regions and republics, suspending the authority of their governments, revoking their legislation and dissolving their parliaments.

"squandering" the national budget on defense expenditures would bring forth "a ruined country and an impoverished people [with] no need for an army."[222]

In the face of strenuous opposition by the civilian leadership, Yazov and Moiseyev did not backtrack. At the 28th CPSU Congress on July 2-13, 1990 Yazov went on with his derogatory remarks and contended that, curbing military spending at a moment when NATO's doctrine, force structure and current programmes reflected the endurance of threat, amounted to gross irrationality. Moiseyev concurred with the Defense Minister, drawing attention to the turmoil in Eastern Europe. He argued that, the Soviet Union was gradually forced into adopting an "unequivocal defensivism" based exclusively on Soviet territory.[223]

It was not only Yazov and Moiseyev who articulated their displeasure for the civilian leadership. Party officials at every level, in particular the conservatives arguing the inefficiency of reforms, expressed their hostility toward Gorbachev. Fearing a demolition, Gorbachev withdrew his "500 Day Plan" -a comprehensive economic reform program- in October. Upon this move, Shevardnadze announced his resignation on December 20. Being the first of many prominent liberals to abandon Gorbachev, he heralded the nearing fall of the Soviet leader.[224]

### 4.8. Concessions and socioeconomic crisis lead to coup

Against this backdrop, the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) was concluded in November 1990, after protracted negotiations dating back to March 1989. Regarded as the most important arms control treaty signed in the post-war period, the treaty set forth a radical change in the balance of power in Europe

[222] *The Washington Post*, July 4, 1990 quoted in Robert L. Arnett, "Soviet Debate Over National Security Policy: Implications For the Military", p. 13.
[223] John Erickson, "Army: Military Perestroika or Military Reform", p. 130.
[224] Vladimir Shlapentokh, *The Last Years of the Empire: Snapshots from 1985-1991*, (Westport: Praeger, 1993), p. 126.

through establishing equal ceilings on major categories of equipment including tanks, artillery and personnel carriers. Most significantly, the Soviet Union and its allies were deprived of the ability to mount a credible surprise attack against NATO countries in Europe. Overall, the Warsaw Pact would have to destroy about 19.000 tanks whereas for NATO, the required number corresponded to only about 4.000. The treaty required no substantial reductions in NATO's armored troop carriers and no cuts in its artillery or combat aircraft whereas the reverse was valid for the Soviet case.[225]

Whether this treaty would contribute to a lessening of economic problems was the question of the day. When, on March 12-19, 1990, the 3rd Congress of the People's Deputies abolished Article 6 of the Constitution, officially ending the monopoly of the CPSU, nobody could have anticipated the catastrophic consequences that would follow. As 1990 drew to an end, the negative developments across the country associated with the weakening of the Soviet political infrastructure, reductions in the authority of the central government, and incompetent management, were clearly visible. Deterioration of the work ethic and of bureaucratic discipline had reared its head as early as 1989, contributing to a decline in production levels. Disarray in the distribution of raw materials, mechanical supplies and food also added up to this dim picture. In 1990, the Soviet economy declined in absolute figures for the first time. Unabated inflation and the disastrous 1990 harvest pointed to further deterioration. The economy's poor performance

[225] F. Stephen Larrabee, "The New Soviet Approach to Europe" in *Contemporary Issues in Soviet Foreign Policy: From Brezhnev to Gorbachev*, Frederic J. Fleron, Jr., Erik P. Hoffmann and Robbin F. Laird, eds., (New York: Aldine De Gruyter, Inc., 1991), p. 656.

coupled with the newly emerging political parties set the stage for national disturbances and influential political opposition movements.[226]

It was not only the civilian population that was smitten by the deepening crisis. Most army officers were critical about indifference and insensitivity to their basic needs such as housing. Their resentment against being elbowed out of power had long before reached a peak. Deprived of their social prestige and established privileges and struck with declining living standards, the military was gradually drawn into collaboration with the top echelons of the military-industrial complex as well as the politico-military bureaucracy of the state and the CPSU.[227]

One consequence of decentralization of the defensemaking process was the advent of a host of new institutions and players. Legislators at both national and provincial levels assumed an increasing part in military decisions. Many republics sought greater role in designing defense programs.[228]

The election of military members to the Congress of People's Deputies and to the Supreme Soviet had legitimized their participation in politics. Uniformed personnel soon began to run for legislative and executive offices. For its part, the military leadership accented harsher appraisals of civilian policymaking. In December 1990, Moiseyev urged Gorbachev "to use his presidential powers to restore stability and halt republic separatism."[229] Yazov agreed with the Chief of

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[226] Vladimir Shlapentokh, *The Last Years of the Empire: Snapshots from 1985-1991*, pp. 125, 131-133, 208; Stephen M. Meyer, "How the Threat (and the Coup) Collapsed", p. 12; John W. R. Lepingwell, "Soviet Civil-Military Relations and the August Coup", *World Politics*, Vol. 44, (July 1992), p. 561.

[227] Vladimir Vasilyevich Serebryannikov, "The Army and the August Putsch," in Steve Hirsch, ed., *MEMO 3: In Search of Answers in the Post-Soviet Era*, (Washington, D. C: The Bureau of National Affairs, Inc., 1992), pp. 22-24; Stephen M. Meyer, "How the Threat (and the Coup) Collapsed", p. 7; John W. R. Lepingwell, "Soviet Civil-Military Relations and the August Coup", pp. 554-555.

[228] Stephen M. Meyer, "How the Threat (and the Coup) Collapsed", pp. 8-9; Ellen Jones and James Brusstar, "The Ministry of Defense", in Eugene Huskey, ed., *Executive Power and Soviet Politics: The Rise and Decline of the Soviet State*, (New York: M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 1992), p. 191.

[229] *Sovetskaia Rossia*, December 22, 1990 quoted in Ellen Jones and James Brusstar, "The Ministry of Defense", p. 192.

Staff on the need to establish order, yet he took one step further, hinting at the role of the army in politics, which could force the institution to "intervene" in domestic matters. As insurgency mounted to top in the Baltics in January 1991, Yazov raised his voice, stressing the military's constitutional right to "defend the country's territorial integrity."[230]

By spring, the revised Union Treaty denoted enhanced center-periphery collaboration. Much to the annoyance of the military, the Treaty endowed the republics with greater powers in the area of military policy.[231]

Nevertheless, as military personnel became more ensnared in politics, sharp divisions within the officer corps rose to surface. Lamenting the diminution in numbers of Soviet weapons and the loss of Soviet dominance in East Europe, the senior military officers featured the conservative wing vis-à-vis junior and middle-level officers who were very reform-minded. The former's indignation grew as the START Treaty was finally materialized in July 1991.[232] Its provisions mandated a 50 percent reduction in the number of Soviet ICBMs and stipulated substantive cuts in the number of ballistic missile warheads, air-launched cruise missiles and bombs (25 percent for the Soviet Union and 15 percent for the U.S.).[233]

In view of these developments, an aggregate of military, party and state bureaucrats set up the Committee for the State of Emergency (SCSE) in August 1991 and took up arms against the civilian leadership. The coup attempt was instigated not by the military, but by the KGB and the Ministry of Internal Affairs.[234] The army halfheartedly partook in the planned undertaking, finally withdrawing its support from the initiative. Akhromeyev, who previously remarked that the military could

[230] Vladimir Vasilyevich Serebryannikov, "The Army and the August Putsch", p. 30.
[231] Stephen M. Meyer, "How the Threat (and the Coup) Collapsed", p. 27.
[232] Ellen Jones and James Brusstar, "The Ministry of Defense", pp. 192-193.
[233] Coit D. Blacker, *Hostage to Revolution*, pp. 184-185.
[234] Beginning from 1968, the Ministry exercised police functions.

not even "entertain the thought of a coup," and Yazov also contributed to the attempt, regretting their involvement in its aftermath. The coup began on August 19 and lasted short, ending on the 22nd . Among the reasons for its collapse were the professional focus on external security threats, reluctance to engage in internal security missions, unfailing adherence to the Constitution by the junior officers, lack of logistical support and the resolve of Moscow citizens who vigorously defended the government and, thanks to the opportunity provided by the 'new thinking', demonstrated their discontent with the military establishment's participation in the abortive coup.[235]

The August coup revealed that almost three decades of efforts to instill into the officer corps the notions of i) abiding loyalty to the civilian authority, ii) institutional duty and mission, iii) intense professionalization had fared well. In supporting the SCSE, the top military brass did not attempt to take power into their own hands and establish their own rule. It was not the army to blame, but political, economic and social factors that led the military personnel follow the orders of the Committee. Feelings of anger and disappointment momentarily materialized into an unfortunate decision, which very quickly became a source of grief. This boomerang effect brought with it severe repercussions concerning the military establishment.

After the coup, the CPSU structures and the politico-military agencies were removed. MPA, the main institution to oversee the military establishment was abolished, and a new directorate assumed its place.[236] Many senior officers were removed from their positions whereas the ones who opposed the coup were promoted

[235] Vladimir Vasilyevich Serebryannikov, "The Army and the August Putsch", pp. 35-41.
[236] In late 1990 and early 1991, Gorbachev had implemented the transfer of the MPA apparatus from the CPSU to the Ministry of Defense and created a new CPSU party organization within the military. However, the initiative proved to be a formality since the relations between the two establishments were very close. To Gorbachev's surprise, the MPA, by the time of the August coup, was acting to a large extent on behalf of its own and of the conservative military leadership.

to higher positions. Reform in the armed forces was accelerated. However, the imminent demise of the Soviet Union would hinder this project. A military reform document that reallocated the ruling of oversight and organizational restructuring could not be signed into law, leaving Russia and the other 14 former Soviet republics in a state of ambiguity.[237]

[237] Vladimir Vasilyevich Serebryannikov, "The Army and the August Putsch", p. 42; Stephen M. Meyer, "How the Threat (and the Coup) Collapsed", p. 27; John W. R. Lepingwell, "Soviet Civil-Military Relations and the August Coup", p. 565.

# CHAPTER V

# CONCLUSION

This thesis chronicled the 'push and pull' between the civilian and military leadership in order to prevail in Soviet defensemaking process. It narrated the magnitude and extent of political control over the high command, and the military's disquietude over these constraints.

In the course of events, some similarities catch the eye characterizing each era under review. As was observed, every Soviet leader began his tenure with a propitiating stance toward the military apropos of the defense budget and relations with the West. Nevertheless, as domestic imperatives demanded a frugal utilization of resources, each withdrew their support. This shift in perspective displayed itself through various means: concessions during superpower negotiations, reductions in military expenditure and slow and incremental exclusion of the high command from the formulation of defense policies.

Differing in their assessment of threat, both institutions often failed to see eye to eye in policymaking. Whereas the civilian leadership placed a premium on economic revitalization (aimed at consumer satisfaction) through détente, the high command demanded constant vigilance against imperialist designs that would catch the country off-guard.

The military leadership countered the civilian view with a mixture of replies. At times, they sought reconciliation with the civilian authority, agreeing to qualitative and quantitative reductions in weapons upon condition that the treaty provisions would not thoroughly enervate the Armed Forces' capabilities. There were two motives behind this consent. Firstly, the endurance of détente would

contribute to upgrading of Soviet military equipment in the form of easy access to advanced Western technology. Secondly, a strong economy, reached through cutbacks in defense expenditure, would later pay off as higher rates in military investment. Yet, most of the time, the high command openly articulated their indignation at what was called 'subjectivism' in defensemaking.

Gradually, the military leadership understood that their established privileges were under close scrutiny and criticism. The army saw that it had long been condemned as the scapegoat, bearing the whole onus for the country's accelerating pace toward political, economic and social turmoil –whereas the reverse case was true. It was the inept management of Soviet affairs by the civilian leadership that precipitated an irreversible decline. This realization caused great consternation in the military establishment. To add insult to injury, the reshuffling and disposal of military personnel and various alterations in the decisionmaking process sought to alienate the military further away from defense planning.

Disjunction between the parties mounted during Gorbachev's tenure when unilateral concessions ranked first in the policy agenda. He soon proved to be an all-around revisionist, intending to distance himself from the foreign and military policies of his predecessors.

Contrary to Brezhnev and Andropov, both of whom had refused to countenance any INF accord that would have crippled the Soviet Union's theater nuclear advantage in Europe, Gorbachev proved to be more than willing to conclude such a deal so as to pave the way for agreement in other areas. Similarly, since 1981, the Soviet Union had vigorously countered the U.S. allegations arguing that the SS-20s deployed in Soviet Europe were offensive weapons. According to the Soviet view, the deployment of several hundred SS-20 missiles between 1977 and 1984 was

a defensive measure, undertaken to ensure a stable balance of forces in Europe. Nevertheless, Gorbachev hastened to trade on these weapons, depriving the Soviet Armed Forces of a very powerful ballistic missile, the capabilities of which surpassed its U.S. counterparts. Soviet acceptance of mutual deterrence and renunciation of the goal of superiority had never been so clear-cut. For Brezhnev, class struggle was not over, but was to be continued by all means short of war. On the other and, Gorbachev de-emphasized the relevance of the international class struggle pointing to the need to engage in arms control and reduced defense spending.

Ironically, the ultimate aim of the civilian leadership, namely, to arrest the drastic deterioration of the economy and to stabilize the political arena failed. As Gorbachev's tenure drew to a close in 1991, the Soviet Union was still in search of a panacea –that would never come. The military's participation in the abortive August coup marked a watershed in civil-military relations. Although the high command's willingness to partake in the attempt was shrouded in ambivalence, it sounded as if the decades long political control over the military establishment had amounted to disobedience rather than loyalty. In effect, the armed forces' withdrawal of support from the coup featured the apolitical nature of the military.

So far, it was highly acknowledged that civil-military accommodation had been a thorny issue and a hard task to materialize. Yet, very few could have anticipated that the Soviet army would turn its back against the civilian authority. The coup was the harbinger of severe repercussions affecting the civilian and military leaderships alike. It catalyzed a more comprehensive restructuring of the military establishment and, most significantly, the demise of the Soviet Union.

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## APPENDIX A

### TABLE 1. SOVIET ECONOMIC GROWTH, 1966-1985
**(official data, average annual rate of growth)**

| % | 1966-1970 | 1971-75 | 1976-80 | 1981-85 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| National income produced | 7.8 | 5.7 | 4.3 | 3.6 |
| Industrial output | 8.5 | 7.4 | 4.4 | 3.7 |
| Agricultural output | 3.9 | 2.5 | 1.7 | 1.0 |

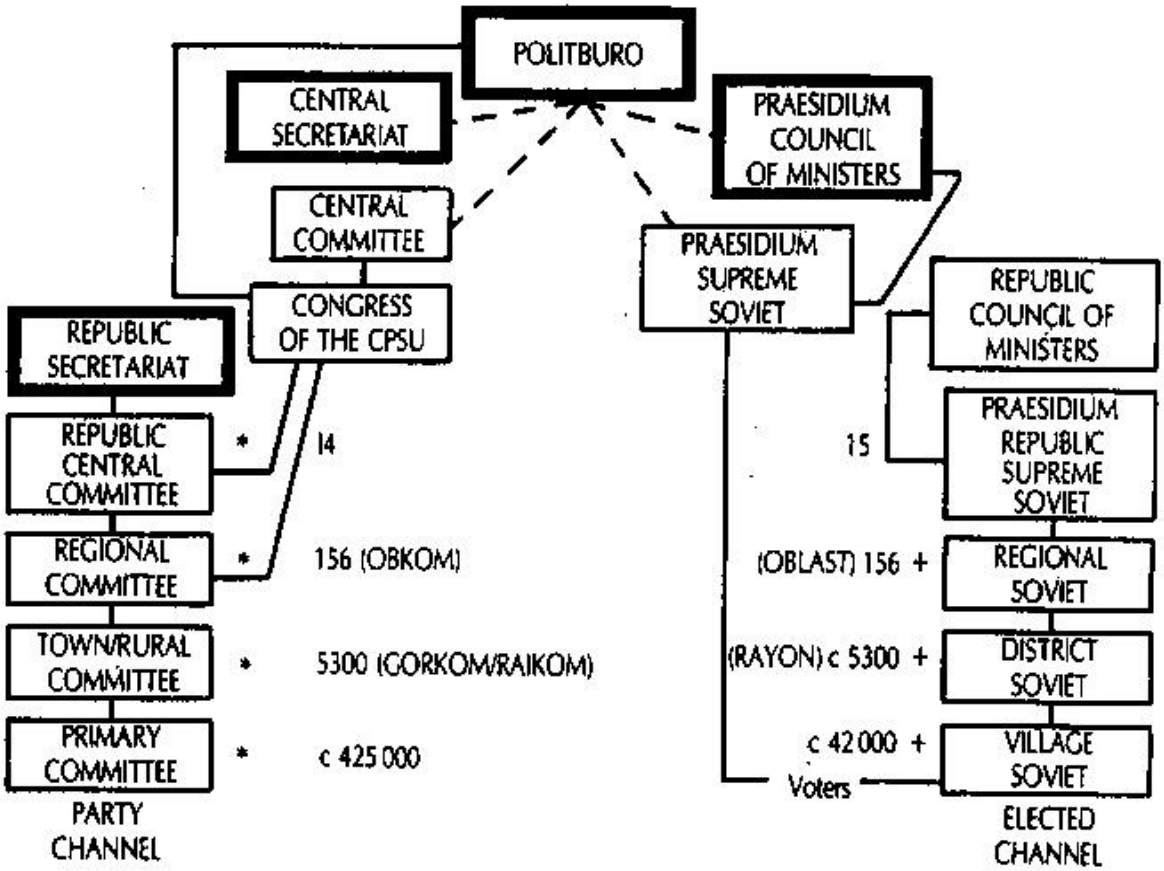
### TABLE 2. SOVIET ECONOMIC GROWTH, 1981-1989
**(official data, average annual rate of growth)**

| % | 1981-1985 average | 1986 | 1987 | 1988 | 1989 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| National income produced | 3.6 | 4.1 | 2.3 | 4.4 | 2.4 |
| Industrial output | 3.7 | 4.9 | 3.9 | 3.9 | 1.7 |
| Agricultural output | 1.0 | 5.1 | 0.6 | 0.7 | 1.0 |

Source: Stephen White, "The Adaptiveness of the Social System," in John Hemsley, *The Lost Empire*, (London: Brassey's Ltd., 1991), pp. 42, 46.

## APPENDIX B

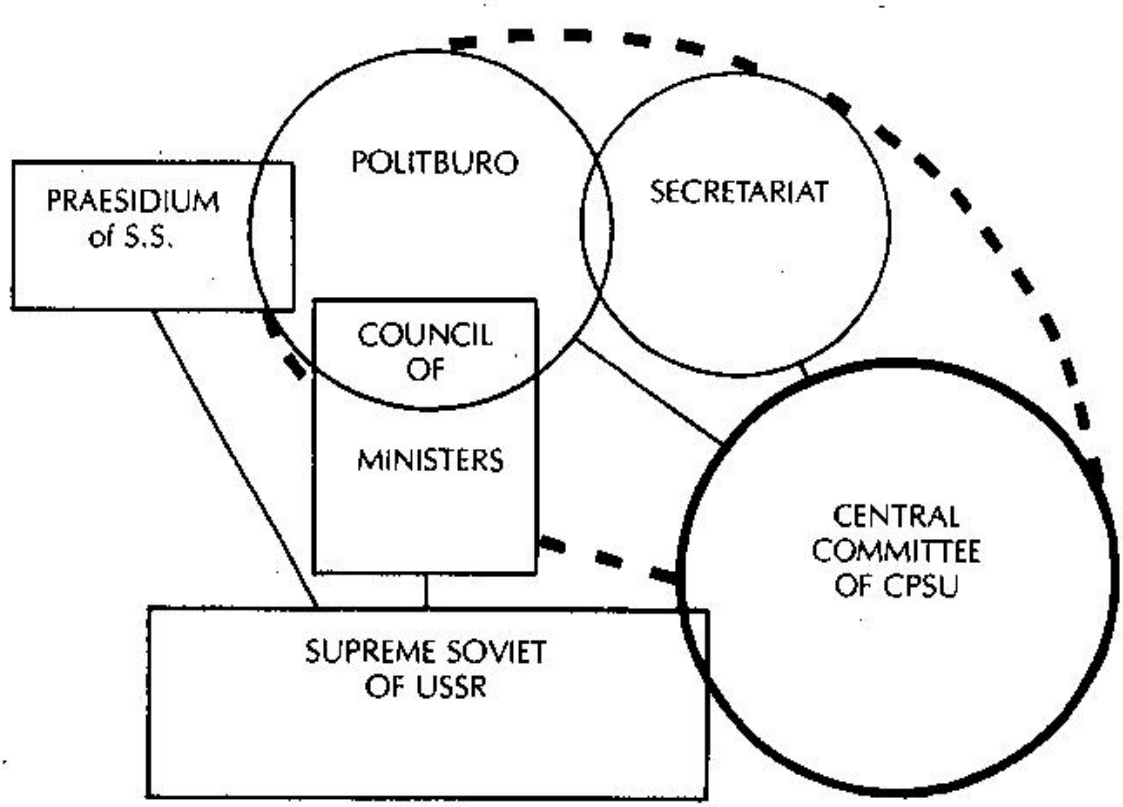
### FIGURE 1. THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE OF THE SOVIET UNION (Brezhnev Era)




Thick-rimmed boxes denote full-time official bodies. Each committee marked with an * is appointed by a biennial congress, and in turn appoints its own small, full-time bureau and secretariat. Each Soviet marked with a + 'elects' in addition to its own Executive Committee.

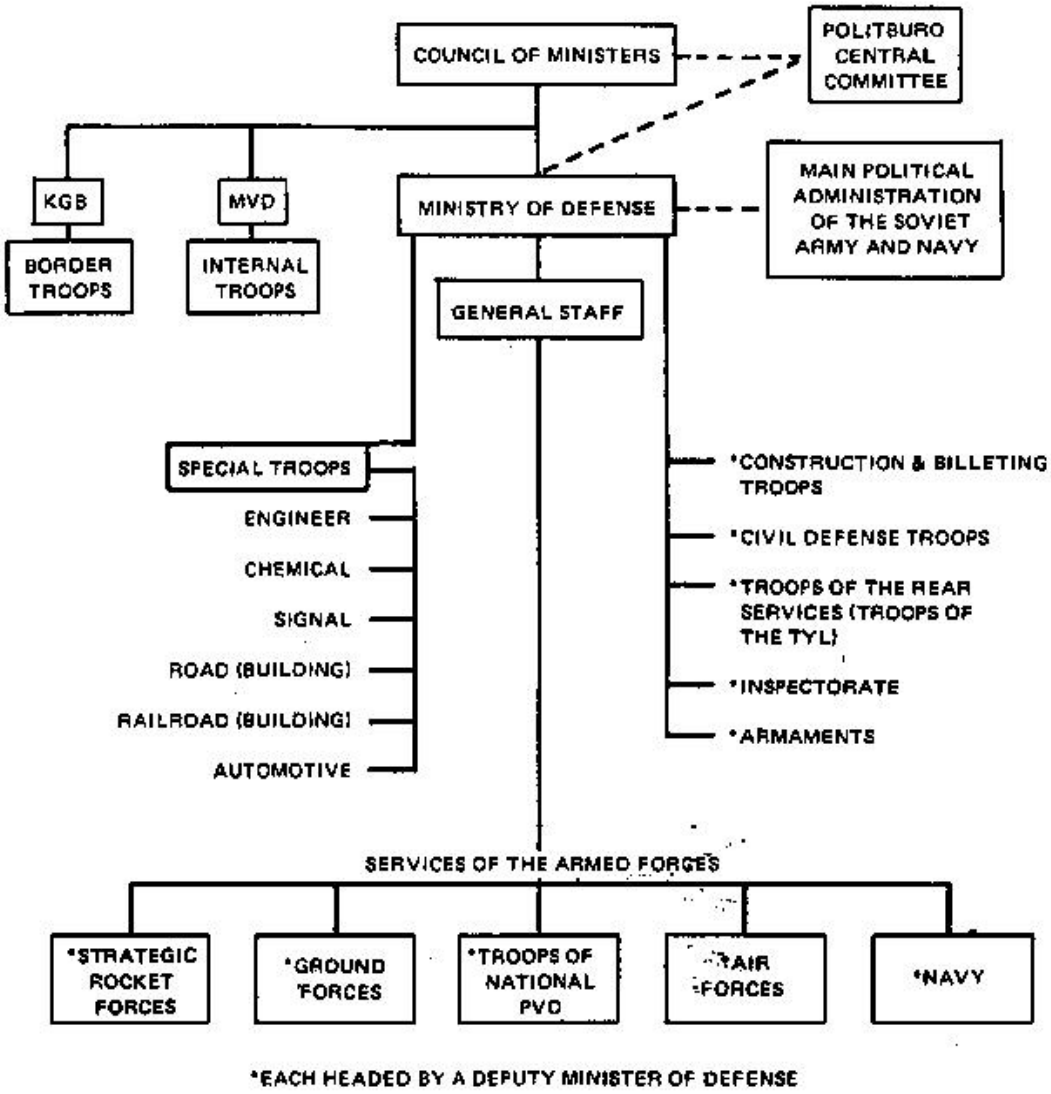
Source: Ian Derbyshire, *The Politics in the Soviet Union: From Brezhnev to Gorbachev*, (Cambridge Chambers, 1987), p. 4

**FIGURE 2. PARTY AND GOVERNMENTAL INTERCONNECTIONS**
**(Brezhnev Era)**



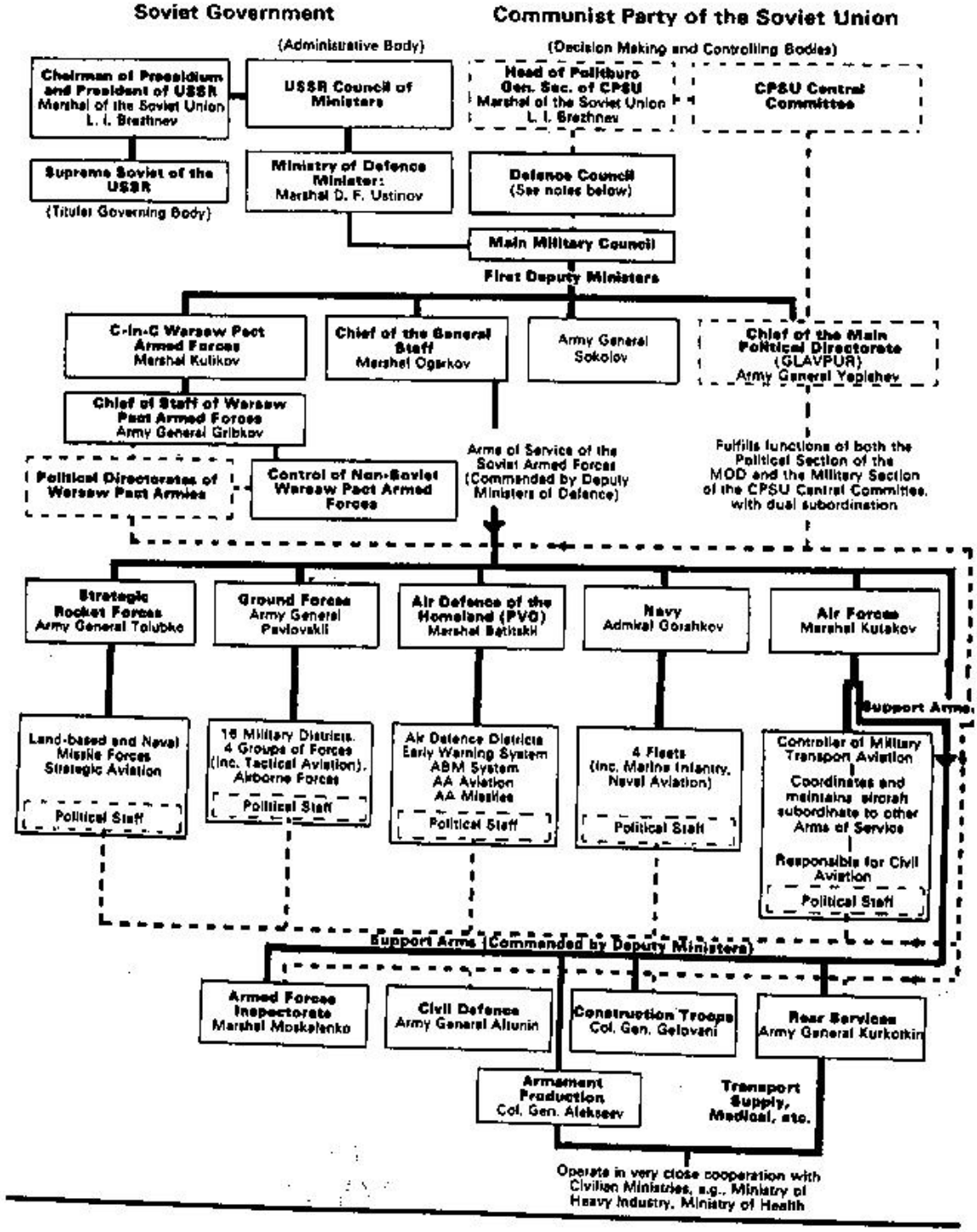

Source: Ian Derbyshire, *The Politics in the Soviet Union: From Brezhnev to Gorbachev*, (Cambridge Chambers, 1987), p. 10.

**FIGURE 3. ORGANIZATION OF THE SOVIET ARMED FORCES**
**(Brezhnev Era)**



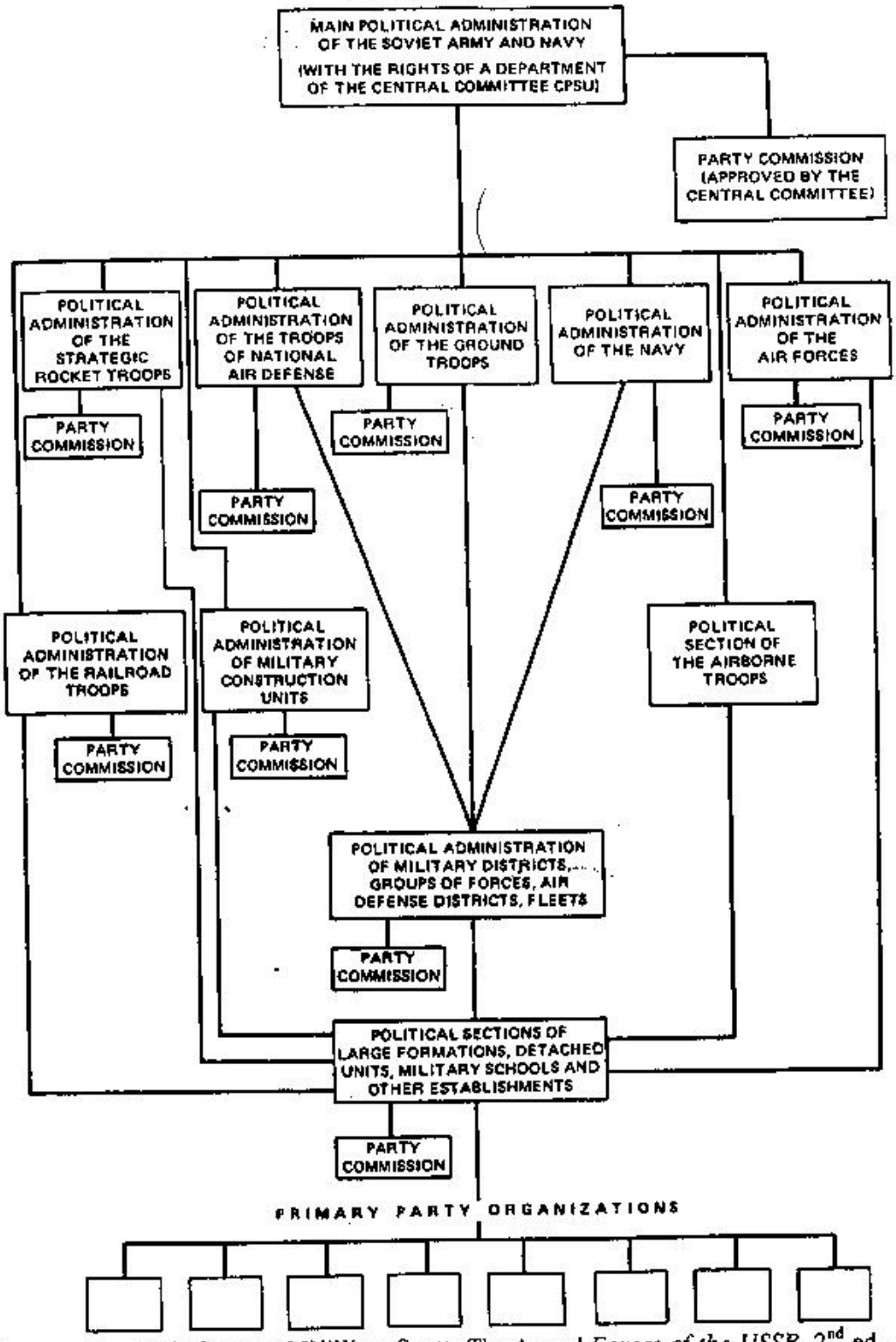

Source: Harriet F. Scott and William Scott, *The Armed Forces of the USSR*, 2nd ed., (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984), p. 133.

## FIGURE 4. MILITARY AND POLITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE SOVIET UNION
(Brezhnev Era)




Source: Viktor Suvorov, *Inside the Soviet Army*, (New York: MacMillan Publishers, Inc., 1982), p. 28-29.

**FIGURE 5. STRUCTURE OF POLITICAL ORGANS IN THE SOVIET ARMY AND NAVY**
**(Brezhnev Era)**




Source: Harriet F. Scott and William Scott, *The Armed Forces of the USSR*, 2nd ed., (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984), p. 267.

FIGURE 6. THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND THE SOVIET STATE
(Gorbachev Era-January 1986)

| PARTY | | STATE | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Legislative* | *Executive* | *Executive* | *Legislative* |
| Politburo* | | Presidium of Council of Ministers | Presidium of Supreme Soviet |
| Central Committee | Secretariat | Council of Ministers | Supreme Soviet |
| Congress (Conference) | Departments | Ministries/ State Committees | Standing Commissions |

* The Politburo exercised both legislative and executive functions.

Source: Cameron Ross, "Party-State Relations," in Eugene Huskey, ed., *Executive Power and Soviet Politics: The Rise and Decline of the Soviet State*, (New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1992), p. 50.

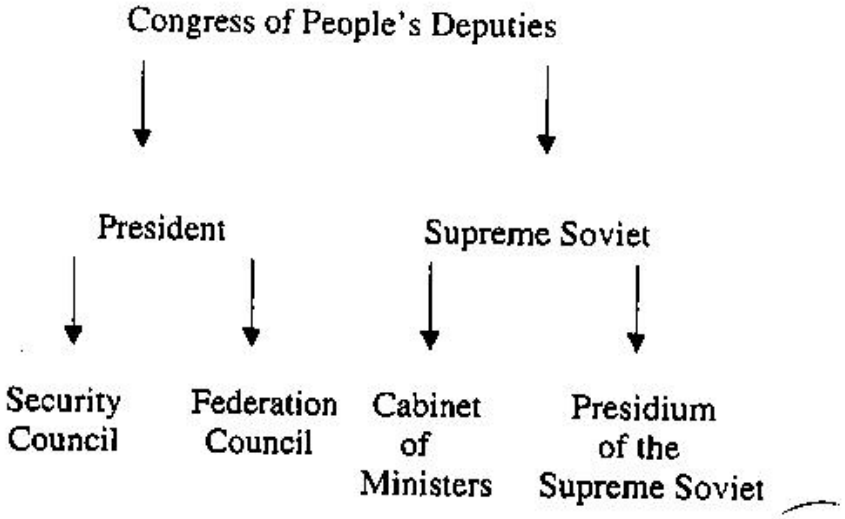
**FIGURE 7. THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND THE SOVIET STATE**
**(Gorbachev Era-January 1991)**

| PARTY | | STATE | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Legislative* | *Executive* | *Executive* | *Legislative* |
| Politburo* | | Presidency | Presidium of Supreme Soviet |
| Central Committee | Secretariat | Cabinet of Ministers | Supreme Soviet |
| Commissions | | Ministries/ State Committees | Congress of People's Deputies |
| Congress (Conference) | Departments | | |

* The Politburo and Commissions exercised both legislative and executive functions.

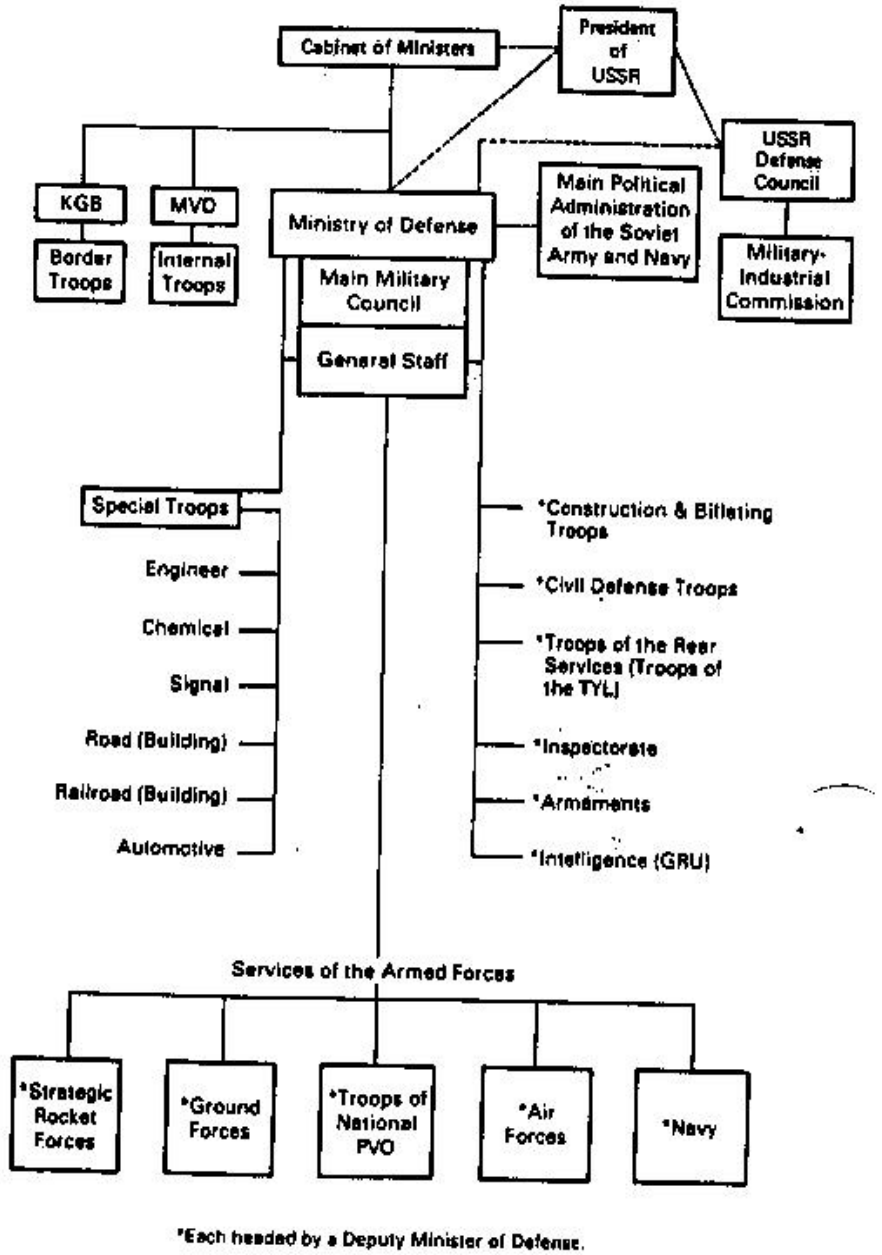
Source: Cameron Ross, "Party-State Relations," in Eugene Huskey, ed., *Executive Power and Soviet Politics: The Rise and Decline of the Soviet State*, (New York: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1992), p. 72.

**FIGURE 8. GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE OF THE USSR**
**(Gorbachev Era)**




Source: Gordon Smith, *Soviet Politics: Struggling With Change*, 2nd ed., (Houndmills: MacMillan Press, Inc., 1992), p. 133.

**FIGURE 9. ORGANIZATION OF THE SOVIET ARMED FORCES**
**(Gorbachev Era)**




Source: Gordon Smith, *Soviet Politics: Struggling With Change*, 2nd ed., (Houndmills: MacMillan Press, Inc., 1992), p. 319.